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PARABLE SERMONETTES

PARABLE SERMONETTES

FOR THE

CHILDREN'S MASS

FOR THE SUNDAYS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

BY THE

Rev. FREDERICK A. REUTER

AUTHOR OF

"SERMONS FOR THE CHILDREN'S MASS," "ANECDOTE SERMONETTES FOR THE CHILDREN'S MASS," "STORY-SERMONETTES FOR THE CHILDREN'S MASS," "READINGS AND REFLECTIONS FOR THE HOLY HOUR," "THE CRUSADE OF GRACE," "MOMENTS DIVINE," ETC.

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Archbishop of New York

NEW YORK, MARCH 1, 1923.

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Reverend P. W. Smith,
Rector of St. John the Baptist Church,
Jersey City, N. J.

Dear Father:

Once upon a time our divine Lord said these words: "Let the little children come unto me." In your priestly career you devoted all your energies to fulfilling this behest of your divine Master. Your zeal manifested itself in erecting institutions of learning and in constructing lasting monuments of Christian character.

In consideration of your noble work these Parable Sermonettes are dedicated to you.

Frederick A. Reuter.

INTRODUCTION

THESE "Sermonettes" were written for the special instruction of children. Many priests often experience difficulty in bringing home sacred truths to the child-mind; to such this volume will be particularly welcome.

The divine Master, while on earth, realized the eagerness with which the youthful, as well as the mature mind yearned for a story, and so He constantly employed the parable, or story, in His teaching.

If this book will revive the good custom of conveying religious truths by means of parables, the author will feel that he has accomplished a blessed work.

In preparing this work the author hereby wishes to express his gratitude to Ven. Sister Raymond, O.S.D., for valuable suggestions.

F. A. R.

Feast of St. Dominic,
August Fourth, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-two.

MT. ST. DOMINIC ACADEMY,
CALDWELL, N. J.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
First Sunday of Advent. Looking Ahead	1
Second Sunday of Advent. Instruments of God	5
Third Sunday of Advent. Sharing our Treasures	10
Fourth Sunday of Advent. The Lord is Nigh	14
Sunday within the Octave of Christmas. The Birth of Christ in the Soul	17
Sunday between New Year's Day and Epiphany. Attachment to Our Father in Heaven	21
First Sunday after Epiphany. Obedience to Parents	27
Second Sunday after Epiphany. Christian Heroes—Charity	31
Third Sunday after Epiphany. Visit of God to the Soul	35
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany. A True Christian	39
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany. All for God	42
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany. A Grain of Mustard Seed	47
Septuagesima Sunday. Laborers in the Lord's Vineyard	51
Sexagesima Sunday. The Power of the Word of God	55
Quinquagesima Sunday. Jesus' Sufferings and Our Sufferings	59
First Sunday in Lent. Back Against the Wall and Fight	63
Second Sunday in Lent. A Race for Heaven	67
Third Sunday in Lent. The Dumb Devil	71
Fourth Sunday in Lent. The Bread of Everlasting Life	74
Passion Sunday. Our Lord, Model of Humility and Meekness	77
Palm Sunday. "Ready to Fly, Ready to Die"	81
Easter Sunday. To Rise with Christ	86
First Sunday after Easter. The Peace of God	89
Second Sunday after Easter. The Lord Our Shepherd	93
Third Sunday after Easter. A Little While	96
Fourth Sunday after Easter. A True Soldier in Christ's Service	100
Fifth Sunday after Easter. The Song of God's Goodness	104

PAGE

Sixth Sunday after Easter. Children of Satan..... 108
Pentecost Sunday. The Spirit of God..... 112
Trinity Sunday. A Wonderful Sign..... 116
Second Sunday after Pentecost. Bread from Heaven.... 120
Third Sunday after Pentecost. The Queen of Our Household 124
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Our Pass to Heaven.... 129
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost. An Unbridled Beast..... 133
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost. Unruly Appetites..... 137
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost. In the Garb of Sheep.. 141
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost. To Give an Account.... 145
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost. Neglect of God's Inspirations 149
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost. The Cornerstone of all Virtues 153
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost. Place a Guard Upon My Mouth 156
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost. Love of Our Enemies. 159
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The Return of the Prodigal 163
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The Service of God 168
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Our Common Debt. 172
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Our Powerful Advocate 176
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. God's Interests and Our Interests 180
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. God Ready to Forgive 184
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Ambassadors of Christ 187
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost. Good Example..... 191
Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost. "Honesty is the Best Policy" 195
Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost. Courage, Obedience, Loyalty 199
Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost. God's Love..... 203
Last Sunday after Pentecost. Remember Thy Last End 207

PARABLE SERMONETTES

PARABLE SERMONETTES FOR THE CHILDREN'S MASS

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Looking Ahead

My dear children, Christmas is drawing near. As ever it is a time of promise. Your hearts are playing hide and seek with the thought of what you would like to have; but perhaps will never get.

There was once a little girl who said nothing when her brothers and sisters were telling everybody what they expected for Christmas. She would not tell her brothers, her sisters, nor her anxious mother and father what she wanted for Christmas.

She was only six years old. Her face was as sweet as that of an angel. Her dark eyes were the mirrors of a wonderful soul. She was never strong nor healthy, so she was unable to attend school as regularly as her companions. She was able to read, however, all the common words in her prayerbook. One day her mother found some prayers for Holy Communion which this little girl had written so early in life.

Although Christmas was approaching, no one could coax little Cecelia (that was her name) to tell what she wished. The priest came to the house one day, and the mother told him that Cecelia would not tell any member

of the family what she wanted for Christmas. "Try her, Father," the mother said, "perhaps she will tell you."

The little girl ran to the priest, and, in childlike manner, whispered in his ear: "I will tell you, Father, what I want for Christmas; I want Jesus, Father, I want to go to Holy Communion."

The good pastor was much affected by what Cecelia told him. With great joy he questioned the little girl on God, His Blessed Mother and the Blessed Sacrament. She knew more than he thought she did. With a little preparation she was ready to make her first confession, and when Christmas-eve came, the child accompanied her mother to make her confession and to prepare for her Christmas gift,—the Christ-Child Himself, who was to come to her on Christmas morning.

At early Mass this innocent little one made her first Holy Communion, kneeling beside her mother.

But this is not all there is to tell about the little girl. She now went to Holy Communion often. One morning, about ten o'clock, the door-bell of the priest's house rang, and the housekeeper found the dear child on the steps. It was a cold day. The little girl looked up at the housekeeper and asked if he would not please tell the Father to give her Holy Communion. Her wish was granted. Shortly afterwards her mother came to the priest's house, inquiring for her daughter. She had let the child sleep beyond the time for Holy Mass, as she was not well. The mother never dreamed that her devoted little daughter would go out without warning. While the mother was busy, Cecelia went to church to receive Holy Communion. Children, this is a true story.

The mother had only words of praise for her little one; for she was obedient, patient and unselfish, never making noisy requests for things, as children often do.

As she grew older Cecelia retained her sweet disposition. She was kind and generous to her brothers, sisters and friends.

Some years after she had received first Holy Communion the priest again said to Cecelia: "What do you wish for Christmas?"

With a wistful smile, she answered: "Good health; for I wish to bring Jesus to the little heathen children some day."

Dear little ones, are there any Cecelias among you? I hope so. All the toys and playthings you are going to get will soon be broken and thrown away, or put into the fire; but is pleasure your only Christmas wish? I hope not. Do as Cecelia did; keep your secret, and the day before Christmas, whisper into mother's ear: "Mamma, I want Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament for my Christmas gift."

A boy called Ned always enjoyed Christmas with his dear parents and relatives. Alas, when he was a grown-up young man there came a Christmas when most of his loved ones were gone. At the very thought of Christmas, a lump that would not down rose in his throat. He did not want a Christmas present; he did not wish to observe Christmas at all. Then dear Jesus performed one of His secret miracles. He drew Ned to Himself and made him think of the tiny Babe, who came loving and asking for love; He whispered to Ned that He would be there on Christmas giving the best of gifts and asking for gifts in return. He showed Ned how much he could give Him by prayer, by receiving Him in Holy Communion; how much more he would get from our Lord than ever father or mother, or sister or brother had been able to give. Jesus asked Ned if he could not forget himself, his selfish loneliness, and think of someone

else's pleasure, of someone poorer than himself; of someone younger than himself who, perhaps, had never enjoyed Christmas. He asked Ned to do something for them, just as if he were doing it for the Lord Himself.

Ned did as the holy Child bade him. Early Christmas morning he received Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar—the very best of all Christmas gifts—and remembered how our dear Lord Jesus loved little children to come to Him. There were some little children in a nearby hospital who could not go home to spend Christmas. Ned took these children to a later Mass and a visit to the crib. The little children were so happy to go to Holy Mass and be near Jesus that Ned felt he himself had never in his life been so happy. He knew, as he had never known before, that a really happy Christmas is one spent with the Infant Jesus and for the Infant Jesus, and that, as long as we spend it with Him and for Him, there can be no such thing as a sad Christmas. When Ned learned all this, he looked at the presents kind friends had sent him, thinking that he would be lonely, thanked God for giving him such good friends, for letting him give pleasure to the little children, but above all else, for giving him Jesus in Holy Communion. It was one of the gladdest Christmas days he had ever known.

So, dear boys and girls, let us not have a sad Christmas. Let us make the best of everything and thank God we have so much; thank Him, too, for giving us good fathers and good mothers, sisters, brothers and kind friends. On Christmas day they will kneel and receive that same dear Lord, and they will learn, as we shall from our dear Jesus, that with Him no Christmas can be sad; nor can Christmas ever be really glad without Him.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Instruments of God

Our Saviour, my dear children, lived at Nazareth from His early childhood. He worked at the humble trade of carpenter with His foster-father, Joseph, a poor man of the town. At the age of thirty He began to teach. He told the people that He was the Son of God and that He had existed from all eternity. Jesus sent St. John the Baptist, who was in prison, word of the wonders He had done, which God alone could do. He said: "The blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the dead rise again." Such wonders are called miracles. God alone can perform miracles. But sometimes God gives the power to a man or woman—even to a boy or girl.

There is one miracle we all can perform—the spiritual miracle. God gives such power to a good boy or girl. I am going to tell you of such a boy whom his friends called "Missionary Mike."

Poor Mike was crippled and had more time for thought than other boys in his class in school because he could not play with them. Four years before our story he had fallen down the stairs, sustaining severe injuries. His left leg became shorter and the hip was disjointed. Mike's one ambition had been to become a priest; but it seemed that with his infirmity this ambition would never be realized.

His parents were poor and lived in a big tenement in the great city of New York. There were five other

children in the family, and with the cost of living very high, there was little hope that poor Mike could ever consult a specialist in such deformities.

One day in school, as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was being explained, the thought: "If I could only be a server," came to him; large tears trickled down his cheeks and a sob rose in his throat. But poor Mike, handicapped by his crutches and a limp, could not even be a server. This hurt him very much.

"What's the matter, Mike?" Brother Andrew whispered, as he bent over the sobbing boy.

"Nothing, Brother, I was only wishing that I was big and strong, so that I could be a missionary and convert the pagans; but with my lame leg, I'm of no account."

"Who said you were of no account? You can be a missionary right now by praying and offering to God the suffering caused by your infirmity. You can do your share, and perhaps God will help you to realize your vocation, Mike. Don't cry; just pray hopefully and cheerfully, everything will come out well," and with an affectionate pat, Brother Andrew walked back to his desk.

That night, Mike, lying awake in bed, thought over carefully what Brother Andrew had said to him.

"I have an idea! I'll save all the newspapers I can get. I'll ask everyone on our floor and in the whole house for their old newspapers. I'll sell them and then I'll have some money to give to the missions," he resolved.

The next day he began his rounds, collecting old newspapers. He explained to everyone that the papers were for the missions. Some did not know what he meant; but they gave him whatever they had, because he was a cripple and they took pity on him.

"I wonder if I should ask the old maid," Mike mused, as he came to the door of a maiden woman who never had a kind word for anyone. Everybody kept away from her and her sharp tongue. Who she might be, what she did, whence she came, were mysteries to all in the tenement. She was considered rich, for she never worked, and her clothes never showed a trace of poverty. Mike looked thoughtfully at the door, then taking a deep breath, he knocked. His heart beat wildly and he felt like running away; but he stayed in the hope of getting some papers.

The door opened, and there stood old Miss Tranby—that was her name.

"Please, ma'am, if you'd be so kind as to give me your old newspapers I'd be very much obliged," Mike chopped out nervously.

"Newspapers!" she rasped.

"Yes'm; for the missions."

"For the missions! Poor as a rat yourself and begging for the missions. Well, I never—" and she eyed Mike as if she doubted his statement. "I'll give you some now, and you may come every Saturday."

She turned away, and soon came back with an armful of papers.

From that time on an odd friendship sprang up between the two. Regularly every Saturday Mike called for the old papers, and Miss Tranby would speak to him. One day she asked him how he got along in school and what he intended to do later. His infirmity and courage had made a strong appeal to her heart.

He told her all about the foreign missions, and of his hope of becoming a missionary, but how little chance he had of ever realizing this ambition. Miss Tranby was a ready listener and unconsciously Mike began to speak

to her of religion. In his boyish way he explained to her some of the beliefs and practices of Catholics.

"Well, I never thought it was that way," she remarked one morning after he had talked longer than usual.

"I'll bring my catechism along the next time and then you can read about what I said," Mike replied, as he gathered up the papers and left.

The next day he brought his catechism, saying, "This is the book we study. I know every answer by heart. Just try me."

She asked him about the resurrection of the dead, about the seventh Commandment, about the Sacrament of Penance, and when Mike had answered all the questions correctly she said: "I *never* thought Catholics were like that. I'm going to read this book."

From that time on, Mike took great interest in Miss Tranby. His visits became more frequent. He brought Catholic papers and pamphlets, on the advice of Brother Andrew, who told Mike to pray for his new friend.

One night after services the pastor met Mike on his way out of church and said: "Michael, a friend of yours called on me to-day."

"A friend of mine?"

"Yes, a lady who says she lives on the same floor as you. She told me a lot about you. She wants to become a Catholic. . . ."

"That's fine," Mike said, filled with joy.

"Not only fine, it's splendid. I want you to pray for her, Michael. Prayer helps very much in these matters. . . ."

"I will, Father," he answered quickly.

A month afterwards Miss Tranby was received into the Church. For Mike it was a very happy occasion. "At least I can pray that others may become Catholics,

even if I cannot become a missionary," he thought, as he attended the Mass during which Miss Tranby received her first Holy Communion.

After Mass the pastor called Mike into the sacristy.

"Well, this has been a great day for you and your friend," he said. "Miss Tranby is now a Catholic, thanks to God's grace and your work. She wants me to tell you something which is very important. She is going to get the best specialist in the city to set your leg. Then she is going to pay your way through college. That's her thanksgiving for the great grace of conversion."

Mike could hardly believe the words he heard. He looked at the priest with tears in his eyes, as he realized all that this meant to him.

Mike really became a missionary after he had finished his studies, and accomplished great work.

Thus you see, my dear boys and girls, that with God's help and powerful grace, "Missionary Mike" performed a spiritual miracle. He gained a precious soul for heaven. We all are instruments in the hands of God through whom we can do wonderful things. What a beautiful and blessed Christmas will be yours, if you can gain a soul for Jesus!

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sharing Our Treasures

Children, the question the Jewish priests put to John the Baptist was: "Who art thou?" This question is of the greatest importance to us all. If you can truthfully answer it by saying: "I am a good Christian; I believe all that the Catholic Church teaches, and do all that she commands," you may be sure of reaching heaven.

Christian boys and girls must be gentle and kind to everybody, merciful to the poor, forgiving to those who offend them, and charitable to those who speak unkind words to them.

How do you act towards the poor? Do you assist them as much as lies in your power? Do you forgive injuries? Do you wish everybody well? Remember that those who are not gentle towards their companions are not true Christians.

Birds are excellent preachers. They give us a lesson in kindness, by sharing good things with others. A little boy one day took great pity on some snow-birds that were looking for food. The ground was frozen and they could not get their usual food. He asked his mother for a few crumbs of bread, which he scattered for the half-starved birds to eat. The little white-breasted creatures joyfully began to eat the meal so unexpectedly prepared for them. Presently a number of bluebirds came down to share the food with them. The snow-birds did not

drive the bluebirds away, but seemed quite satisfied to share the good things spread before them.

A lesson in kindness is constantly taught us by nature. The ivy clings to the tree, which shares its strength with the clinging vine; the oyster shares its home with the tiny crab in need of shelter; the flowers share their sweet nectar with the bees. All these share with and aid one another, not knowingly, but following blindly God's law.

Children, I need not dwell any longer on the pleasure of sharing our joys with others. Most of us know that the pleasures we share are doubled in sharing; for what, for instance, would a party with only one guest be? and who ever heard of a feast with only one at the table? We all know that those we love "double our joys and our cares divide." If this be true of earthly blessings, what of spiritual blessings? I fear we often fail to share these with others and thereby fail to increase our own blessings.

We have the privilege of assisting often at Mass; I hope you do so very often during the holy season of Advent. But do we share the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with others as we should? We go to Holy Communion often, but do we share the blessings of this great love-feast with our neighbors? At Mass we kneel at God's feet and, at the moment of Communion, we draw very near to our divine Lord. Do we then speak to Him of the needs of others? This is the time to share graces with those in need, those who do not know our divine Lord, those who are strangers to Him, or who love Him, yet for some reason cannot approach Him as often as we. We can share our feast with them through prayers.

"Mighty is the prayer prayed at Mass." At that time we should not be content to be there ourselves, wrapped

in our own devotions or pleading for our own needs, but, spurred on by love of our neighbor, we should urge his claims, his needs—pour out before God our petitions for sinners, for the afflicted, for those in sorrow. Your prayer, dear children, will be the means of graces for countless others, graces that will be hidden from you, perhaps, but will be none the less real. Some poor missionary in a far-off land will wonder to whom he owes the strength that comes day by day to help him check his longing to return home. A priest struggling with a poor sinner will see that his words have brought about sincere repentance, for God's grace falls upon the sinner "like dewdrops on a rose." This grace for the poor sinner, this help for the priest in his noble fight for the salvation of others, you will have brought down from heaven by your prayers.

Teresa, the "Little Flower," even as a child, knew the value of prayer. Once she heard that a criminal, unrepentant of the crime for which he was condemned to death, was confined to jail in her home town. Little Teresa prayed and asked God to give this poor man the gift of repentance, that his sins might be washed away. She wished to share her robe of innocence with him. The morning of the execution she read, with gratitude to God, that the criminal had asked for a priest, had confessed his crime, and gone bravely to his death in expiation of his sins.

The angels hover about us, though we do not see them. They bear to God's throne the prayers we whisper to our Father in heaven. If we add some little sacrifice to these prayers they will have greater value in the eyes of God.

There are no flowers on the altar during Advent; but let us, dear children, offer to God garlands of earnest

prayer for pardon for sinners and light for those who do not know the way to Him. Thus will our season of Advent be well spent.

Felix Mendelssohn, one of the world's great musicians, went one day into the old cathedral at Freiburg, where there was a wonderful organ. He had often wished to play it. On entering the sacred edifice, he found the old sexton in the church. The musician asked permission to play for a little while on the wonderful organ; but the old man shook his head, and said: "No, no, that could never be." Mendelssohn talked so long and begged so hard to be allowed to play, that at last the sexton consented, and the great musician began to play. The man listened as the great cathedral was filled with melody. It went on and on and on; never in all his life had the old man heard the great organ play such wonderful music!

Now, boys and girls, your life and mine is just like that great organ in Freiburg. We are here in the world to make the sweetness of our virtues roll like music through the arches of life's great cathedral. There often comes One to us who at first seems to be a stranger, as Mendelssohn was to the old sexton—One who asks permission to make use of our talents and our days. He is not a stranger. His name is Jesus, and if we allow Him, He will bring forth from our lives the most beautiful music and fill the world with harmony and happiness.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The Lord Is Nigh

Like a good mother, my dear children, the Church is always looking after the welfare of her spiritual children. To-day, the last Sunday of Advent, she once more reminds us of the approach of the Feast of Christmas. She exhorts us to do penance. By penance we prepare the way for the dear Infant Saviour to come into our hearts.

Once there was a little girl, eleven years old, who was very troublesome and stubborn. She always wanted to have her own way, and became angry at the slightest refusal. This continued for a long time; her teachers despaired of ever being able to correct her.

But suddenly an unexpected change came over this little girl. Her evil habits entirely disappeared, and she became one of the most obedient children in the school.

One of her teachers observed that, from time to time, she put her hand upon her breast, and fondled something she carried there. The teacher asked her why she did so.

Blushing and confused, the child whispered: "It is to help me to be good."

Questioned by the good Sister, the little one shyly drew forth a crucifix, which was suspended from her neck by a ribbon. "Sister, I wish to do penance," she said, "and want to prepare myself well for the Feast of Christmas. When I am tempted to be naughty, I press this image to my heart, and then I find it easy to be good. But please, Sister, do not tell this to anyone."

The good Sister then understood that it was Jesus Himself, and the thought of His sufferings, that had wrought

such a change in this little girl. So, dear children, think frequently of the sufferings of Jesus, and make acts of contrition for your sins which caused them, and you too will learn how much the Infant Jesus will do for the little ones who love Him.

> The Christ-child comes with soft white feet,
> To touch earth's paths and make them sweet.

This is the meaning of Christmas, dear children. Think how dreary the world would be without our Lord Jesus. Hundreds of years before His coming men sighed and longed for Him. We are happier than those who lived before His coming, for we know Him and we feel that love which brought Him from His bright home in heaven to our earth, where suffering and death awaited Him.

In the stable at Bethlehem the great God became a tiny Babe for love of us. Because of our joy at the birth of our Saviour, we gather around the Christmas tree and make merry; and because we are Christians, we try to make those around us happy—those in our own home, as well as the poor and the old. We do this for love of the Christ-child who brought all good things to us. When a tree bears apples, we know it is an apple tree; when its fruit is peaches, we know it is a peach tree; the Christmas-tree bears all kinds of gifts, and is a symbol of the dear Christ-child who brought us all kinds of good things on His coming to earth that first Christmas night.

What shall we give Him in return? His baby hands, outstretched in the manger, ask only one thing of us—*love,* in return for so much love. The world, indeed, gave Him no welcome; the stable was cold and cheerless, His bed was straw. What an exchange for the

kingdom of His Father! Yet His love for us was so great that He endured even the cross, to show us how much He loved us. Now He wants love in return. You know, my dear boys and girls, how much love comforts you when you are downhearted; even so you can comfort Jesus by your love for all He suffered.

After we have told Him that we love Him, we must also *show* Him our love; for Jesus said to His disciples: "Not all who say, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but He who doth the will of my Father in heaven." We do the will of God our Father if we keep His Commandments, if we refrain from sin and do good. There are many ways of doing good, such as little deeds of kindness, little words of encouragement and affection. By these gifts which are not bought with gold or silver, we can make others happy; not only at Christmas, but all year. If we made a practice of giving such gifts every day would be Christmas, as I have heard many boys and girls wish it could be, and we should set up a real Christmas-tree in our homes that would ever be kept green by our kind thoughtfulness of others.

Well, that is giving—what about receiving? Can you not guess?

A little boy was once led by his father to the edge of a wood. The father said to him: "Call out, I love you, I love you." The boy did so, and back came the words, "love you, love you." Now said the father: "Call out, I hate you, I hate you." Again the boy did as he was told and the echo faithfully threw back the words, "hate you, hate you." Thus also love is answered by love, and those who give love receive love in reward. Now each one of you can keep Christmas green all the year round by imitating the Christ-child in His great love for the spiritual welfare of men.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

The Birth of Christ in the Soul

Children, you have visited the little Infant in His crib; you have adored Him with the shepherds, and your hearts were filled with gratitude at the great love that Jesus has for each one of us. As you looked at that little Babe did you not wish, deep down in your heart, that you could make Him more comfortable? The cave at Bethlehem was dark and cold and cheerless, like a grave, until the divine glory illuminated it and it was filled by the angels who attended the Saviour. So our hearts are without hope and without joy, unless the light and grace of God be born in them. If thus far you have not offered your hearts to Jesus at the crib, do so now.

When you have a longing and an intense desire to have Him for your own, to have Him come and take entire possession of you, to have Him change and form you into His own image and likeness, so that all that is mean and low in you may be removed, and you may be filled with what is high, and noble, and grand, then is He born in your heart; for you are become the living image of Jesus Christ and followers, in all respects, of His example.

If you are always good, children, if you keep God before your eyes: if you learn well, pray devoutly, and obey willingly, the dear Infant Jesus will be pleased with

you and will make His home in your heart. But if you are naughty children, and will not try to learn or pray, but tell lies, refuse obedience, and do other naughty things, the Infant Jesus will forsake you. Therefore, kneel down before the crib and promise Jesus very earnestly that you will always be good.

In the year 1876, Sister Helen, of the Order of St. Francis, who had gone to a foreign land to help win souls to God, was one day visiting a benefactress of the convent where she resided.

This lady had a servant, Miriam by name, who was a Mohammedan negress. After dinner had been served, the humble girl quietly approached the Sister and whispered in her ear: "I want to be a Christian." "If you are sincere in your desire, God will help you in His own good time," answered the Sister. Thus they parted, neither realizing under what sad circumstances that help would come.

From her childhood this poor girl had been the slave of cruel masters, who treated her most unkindly, until she found her way into the service of the kind benefactress of the convent in Cairo.

Frequently this servant girl accompanied her mistress to church and listened with great attention to the sermons she heard delivered there. During the Christmas festivities she spent whole hours in prayer before the crib, adoring the One she did not know. God alone knows how heartfelt were her prayers. The divine Child was the first to speak to the heart of Miriam and give consolation to her who had known sorrow and tears nearly all her life.

One evening she fell asleep in her chair. Close to her a lamp was burning. In her sleep she leaned against the lamp, her dress caught fire and she was soon enveloped

in flames. The poor girl cried out in her distress; but before help arrived her body was terribly burned.

Her mistress, overwhelmed with grief at this accident, sent in haste to the convent in Cairo to obtain help of the Sisters. The wounded girl was taken to the convent and the chaplain was immediately summoned to her bedside. Finding Miriam fully instructed in the rudiments of our holy religion, he exhorted her to be resigned in her suffering to the holy will of God. Her answer filled him with amazement. "One must suffer here," she said, "if one wishes to be crowned hereafter. In a short time I hope to possess God, and be eternally happy with Him."

She was baptized, and three days after she made her first Holy Communion—the Communion that served also as her Viaticum. Holding the crucifix close to her heart she murmured, "Oh, it is all over now! I am going to meet my Jesus, whom I love so much." With these words her pure soul entered the haven of peace.

This young girl, indeed, put many Christian girls and boys to shame. The divine Infant, whom she visited so frequently, even when she did not know the beautiful message He came on earth to bring to the hearts of men, rewarded her fidelity by giving her an everlasting home in His heavenly mansion.

One very precious gift of heaven is the gift of time. A new year will soon begin, another year of grace for those of good will. This gift of days, weeks and months is material out of which, if they are well used, we can fashion for ourselves a happy eternity.

Have you ever shot at a target? If so, you know that you must aim higher than your mark in order to hit it, for the arrow will hit lower than you aim. So our aim must be to reach the highest and best, because we realize

that we shall fall short of our hope of perfection. This constant aim at the highest will lead to the highest perfection that is possible in us.

Two little boys were playing on the floor with building blocks while their grandmother looked on, dreaming of the past. The blocks kept falling in spite of the care of the younger boy, and his brother exclaimed, "Now, if you built a low house like mine, it would not fall." "No," answered the little one, "I shall build high up to the sky, even if I have to try again and again. The grandmother smiled, nodding her wise old head, "Well, said, little builder; when it falls build again and better."

Years passed and the boy never forgot this wise admonition. As he grew to manhood he continued to plan bigger things than he had already done. In spite of the failures that must come to all of us in the upbuilding of life, he became a great man and indeed builded "up to the sky." He fashioned his life for time and eternity. Men wondered that he had done so much with his limited opportunities. You see, dear children, while others were satisfied to build low; that is, to cherish low ideals of life, he always strove to reach the highest, and thus did he realize, in his own life, the friendly advice given by his good old grandmother.

My dear boys and girls, "Hitch your wagon to a star," is an old saying; aim at nothing low. Strive for nothing less than perfection, for perfection is made up of detail. Did you ever hear it said that "A chain is as strong as its weakest link." It is indeed the strength of the weakest link that determines how strong the whole chain will be. Let us then resolve to perform each action, however small, as perfectly as we can; and then shall we make of the days of our life a strong, beautiful chain to bind us fast to God's heart.

SUNDAY BETWEEN NEW YEAR'S DAY AND EPIPHANY

Attachment to Our Father in Heaven

My dear children, I am sure that your father and mother are everything to you. Where your parents are you wish to be; you will run after them and cling to them; when they go out you cry if you are left behind. You are led by their hand; you prefer your father and mother to all others. Even if a king or a queen should approach you, you would turn away and stretch your little hands toward your parents. Even if they be poor and in rags, you feel at home and safe with them; if they are cross or punish you, you will not leave them for the caress of a king or a queen. Such is your childlike nature, such is your attachment to father and mother.

In the same way, the childlike disposition of a Christian boy or girl should manifest itself toward God, our heavenly Father. Nowhere is the real Christian child content but with God; he wishes to be with Him always; therefore he loves to think often of God. St. Aloysius' thoughts were always with God. Not only when he was alone and at prayer, but also while in company and occupied in his daily tasks, he was constantly occupied with divine things. The childlike Christian boy or girl loves to speak of God, to say a heartfelt prayer. A true Christian child receives Jesus in Holy Communion as often as he can, and esteems himself happy to be able to unite himself with his God and Saviour.

Children, are your thoughts often with God? Do you love to pray? Does it afford you joy and pleasure to receive Holy Communion? If you are obliged to say "No" in answer to these questions, a childlike disposition is wanting in you and you must, therefore, change; for without a childlike heart you cannot be children of God, nor have a claim on heaven.

What would you think of a boy who kept an apple until it was rotten before he tried to eat it? What would you think of a girl who kept a rose until it wilted and faded away before she wore it? What would you think of a man who bought an automobile and never used it until it was rusted? What would you think of boys and girls who waited until they were men and women before giving their hearts to the Lord Jesus?

I will tell you of a girl who thought that she was not old enough to give herself to God, and wished to have what she thought was a good time, before she became a good Christian child. Her name was Elizabeth, and she lived in the great city of New York, where she had many friends to accompany her to the places she visited.

One day her mother, whom she loved dearly, became ill, very ill, and a nurse had to attend her almost constantly. The nurse chosen was a very beautiful young woman and a model Christian. She soon became much interested in Miss Elizabeth, whose ways were very winning. The nurse wondered why the little girl had never given herself to God, and made up her mind that some day, before Elizabeth's mother had recovered, she would speak to her. After the mother's condition was much improved a friend sent a bouquet of beautiful roses, and the nurse, who had been waiting for a favorable opportunity, said: "I think we will not take these flowers to your good mother just now. They are so fresh and sweet

and beautiful. Let us put them before the picture of the Sacred Heart for a few days, and then we can take them to her."

While the nurse was getting the vase and water for the flowers, Elizabeth became very angry and indignant, and told the nurse that she would do no such thing, but take the roses to her darling mother immediately. With the sweetest of smiles, the nurse put her arm around Elizabeth and said: "Yes, I think too that your mother ought to have the flowers when they are sweet and fresh, and we will take them to her soon; but don't you think also that God ought to have your life when it is at its best? Yet you are keeping your beautiful young life from Him, waiting until you are older. Do you think you will be willing to give Him some of your time after you have spent the very best time of life—youth—in worldly pleasures in which God has little or no share?" Was not that a very practical sermon? Elizabeth immediately saw what the nurse meant, and that very day she gave her heart to Jesus Christ, her God and Saviour.

We are never too young to love Him, and boys and girls should learn to love Jesus just as sweetly, just as surely and just as early as they learn to love their fathers and mothers.

A young man named Charles, who was a great student, having attended the last service of the year just passing, said to himself, on his return from church: "I will sit here for a few moments in this big easy chair before I go to bed."

And lo! there suddenly stood before Charles a stern-looking giant. His hair was long and gray. His eyes seemed to bore through Charles as if he knew Charles' thoughts. His great arms were strong enough to crush the life out of any ordinary man. Charles crouched low

in his chair. He wished to hide himself, if he could, from such a visitor. "Who is he?" "Why has he come?" thought Charles. At last the visitor's lips parted. His voice was very deep:

"Where, where," he thundered, "where is the money you owe me; that I gave you and you promised to repay?"

Charles owed no money; he had borrowed none; he had never promised to pay any, yet it seemed useless to argue with this great giant.

"Come, answer me. Where is the money I gave and that you owe me?"

"I have no money," Charles whispered, thinking his helplessness would appeal to this tyrant.

"No, you have none. But I gave you a good deal. I gave you hundreds of dollars. You promised to use them well and make them profitable. Where are they?"

"I don't know," answered Charles.

"If you don't know, who does? I gave the money to you alone. No one else had it. What have you done with it?"

"What do you mean?" Charles at last had the courage to ask. "What right have you to ask such things of me? Who are you?"

"Who am I? Why, don't you know me? I've been with you a long time. I've grown old in your service. My name is 19 . . . When I was born I gave you over three hundred dollars—you call them days—and you promised to invest them, to use them well, and pay me back. You've given me very little and now I want what's left."

Then Charles began to understand. He had often been told that time was money; but he had never seen it so clearly before. Where were all the days he had received

for investment? What had become of them? How had he used them? Yes, a year ago he remembered that he had promised, oh, so faithfully, that if the whole year were given to him he would use well every day. The morning would have his song of joy; the day would know his kindness, his loyalty, his faithfulness; and the evening, ere it went into the western land of darkness, would leave its blessing with him.

Now, as he looked back, he saw how much of his money or his time, whatever you wish to call it, he had squandered. How often he had thought time would never pass, and yet, when he looked back, how quickly it had passed! How many broken resolutions and promises showed days misspent, duties overlooked, studies neglected, opportunities gone! Here now was the master of time—the Lord and Master, who gave time to the children of men.

Evidently old Father Time was so angry, so displeased with Charles, that he would give him no more time. He had come to collect his debt and, seeing it could not be paid, he would stop giving time—he would call death to end his gift. And Charles grew more and more afraid, for he was not yet ready for that; he still wished to show God that he would use time well. He sank to his knees, clasped his hands in fear and looked up at the giant before him:

"Oh, ask not what I cannot give. I know I have abused your gift. Few of the dollars you gave me, few of the days you granted me, have I used as I ought. But be merciful! I am sorry that I cannot pay you what I owe. Be merciful; forgive; be kind. Give me more time and I will use every minute of it as I ought. I will invest every day of it in good deeds. Trust me once

more, I implore, I beseech you," and overcome with fears and with tears, Charles hid his face and bowed his head.

It was long before he dared look up. Father Time said nothing; he did not move. It would have been a relief to hear even his harsh, deep voice. Would he not speak? Would he not forgive? Or would he call his fearful messenger to execute sentence? Charles could bear it no longer. He lifted his head, then his eyes. Lo! what and who was this before him? Where was the fearful giant? He was not to be seen. In his place stood a fair young man, kind and loving in aspect. His hands were outstretched towards Charles, and they held what seemed a great mass of precious, glittering gold.

"Here, gentle sir," he said, as Charles looked in amazement, "here is a great gift for you. It is three hundred and sixty-five days. It is called 19 . . , and it is yours to use for good. It is all yours. God has given it. God has loaned it to you. Don't forget that some day He will ask it from your hands."

And with renewed tears, but this time of joy and gratitude, Charles bowed his head again. When he lifted it to look on the fair youth he was gone! In front of Charles was the familiar bookcase. He was not kneeling. No, he was sitting in his easy chair. He had just awakened! It had all been a dream, a significant one!

He went to bed with stronger and happier resolutions than ever before, determined to face joyfully and bravely the year of 19 . . .

Children, like Charles, give this new year to God. Show by your actions how you can be attached to your greatest Benefactor and Father who is in heaven. Show that you too can invest that precious money, the days of the new year, in good deeds that will bring you interest in heaven.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Obedience to Parents

Children, Jesus, the Son of God, the Lord of heaven and earth, whom the angels adore, was subject, that is, obedient, to Mary His mother, and Joseph His foster-father. Should not this obedience of your Saviour teach you to be obedient to your parents? Children who are obedient to their parents will be happy and blessed. Obedient children may hope for heaven, while disobedient children must expect punishment in this life and in the life to come.

Consider the example of Jesus. The holy Fathers say that He obeyed in all domestic affairs and labors; He carried water, swept the floor, cleared the table, dusted the chairs, assisted Joseph in his shop; in short He performed all the work that was given Him to do in an obedient spirit. It was a pleasure for Him to help His parents whenever they needed His services. If the Son of God was so humble that He became a servant, can it be hard for you to do joyfully what your parents command? Could you look up to Jesus without blushing, if you had to say: "Jesus, whom men and angels serve, practiced obedience to His parents for thirty years, and I, a helpless child, will not submit to the commands of my parents! I am stubborn and want everything to go my way; I pretend to understand things better than my parents. I get angry if I do not get what I want." Oh,

children, consider the obedience of Jesus; learn how sinful it is to be self-willed, and never again be guilty of disobedience.

Once there was a girl who, although not naughty was very giddy, disobedient to her parents, and more fond of amusements than her lessons. One day the priest gave her a picture of the child Jesus, and asked her to place it before her eyes when she was preparing her lessons. She did this, not so much that she might keep in her mind the presence of God, but to please the priest who gave her the picture.

As it hung before her, she saw it every time she raised her eyes from her books. At first she did not give much thought to the holy child Jesus, but by degrees she began to think oftener of Him and even sometimes to say a short prayer to Him. One day, as she was looking at the picture longer than usual, she said to herself, "Oh, how good Jesus has been to me, and I am so sinful and ungrateful." Then the tears came to her eyes. "He came into this world," she thought, "that I might go to heaven, and I think so little about Him and heaven. But, dear Jesus, it shall be so no longer, for I will mend my ways, and love Thee more than I have."

The girl kept her resolution. She became obedient and pious, to the astonishment of her parents, who could not imagine what had produced the change in the child. But the priest who had given her the picture knew, and in his heart thanked God and prayed for her, that she might persevere.

An obedient child will make good use of his time. We are still in the first days of the new year, and can make resolutions to spend every day and month well.

The new year holds in its hands a great gift for you

and me: the gift of over three hundred days, for us to spend as we will; and we have the power to spend them for good.

The year that is gone also counted over three hundred days in its course. Alas! Perhaps we misspent some, wasted others, until we had only the fruits of a few days to offer to God. If this be true, here is a new year, come with bright promise of hope that we may make up what was wanting in the year that has gone. How good God is to give us another chance to make good use of His gift of time!

We read in the Old Testament of a king named Baltassar, whose heart grew so full of pride that he forgot God, and sinned against Him; forgot that the kingdom he enjoyed and the power he held were from the most high God to whom he would have to render an account of all his deeds. One day Baltassar gave a great banquet. While he and his guests were feasting and making merry, there suddenly appeared a writing on the wall in the magnificent room of the palace where the feast was spread. The king saw the writing, but could not understand the words: *"Mane, Thecel, Phares."* He called the wise men of his kingdom to interpret the words for him, but they could not do so. The queen then told him of a wise man named Daniel, who she was sure would read the writing on the wall, for the Spirit of God rested on him. So Baltassar sent for Daniel. He came and read the mysterious writing, which told the king that his kingdom would be taken from him. Daniel fearlessly read aloud the terrible words: "For thou hast been weighed in the balance and found wanting."

Alas for Baltassar! He would have given half his kingdom for time to repair the wrongs of his reign; but

he had misused the gift of time God had given him, and that very night the Medes and Persians entered Babylon, took the kingdom, and slew the king.

"Weighed in the balance and found wanting,"—these are, indeed, terrible words. I hope they cannot be applied to any one of us, but if they can be truly said of any one of you, thank God, here is another year for each to repair the past. Let us then do better, lest we too be found wanting.

Once I read a story of a girl who had wasted much of her time and was called from earth before she had made up for the lost days. She went to heaven. St. Joseph met her at the gate and led her through paradise to find her home in heaven, her place for all eternity. They passed many beautiful mansions, but St. Joseph shook his head, as there was none for her. Past the beautiful places they went until they came to a tiny thatched hut and here St. Joseph stopped: "And is this mine?" cried the soul he led, "why not a better place for me?"

St. Joseph smiled sadly: "We did the very best we could with the scant material you sent us," he said. So there she had to dwell modestly for all eternity, when she might have had a much more beautiful place in heaven. What does this legend mean?

There is always some lesson hidden in these tales. This one contains the truth our Lord Himself spoke when He said to His disciples: "There are many mansions in my Father's kingdom." And, children, we have to use well the days given to us here below, not only that we may enter into heaven and thus be saved; but that we may send before us material for the building of a noble mansion, such as our Lord desired to give all His friends.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Christian Heroes—Charity

My dear children, Jesus has made us all children of God. He taught us all to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven." Through Jesus Christ we are all brothers and sisters, and as our relationship is so close we must sincerely love one another. In what does brotherly love consist? In wishing well and doing well to one another; good brothers and sisters entertain kind feelings towards one another; they rejoice in one another's good fortune, wish one another well, share their pleasures and sorrows with one another, and assist one another in every necessity. We must all treat one another in this manner, because we are all brothers and sisters. The saints showed this brotherly love. We read in the life of St. Vincent de Paul that there was no instance of misfortune which he did not approach with kindness. Christians who were prisoners, slaves of the Turks, children who had lost father and mother, nuns driven from their convents, strangers who had been taken ill, the insane, and numberless other human beings in need,—all found help and a place of refuge through him. Alas, children, many Christians have not the slightest understanding of this brotherly love! Many wish their neighbor evil rather than well; they are hard-hearted and refuse every act of kindness. This is contrary to the spirit of brotherly love.

God raises up heroes and heroines in every walk of life, dear children, to do His holy work. There were queens who were noble Christian women; and there were humble workers who distinguished themselves by their

sacrifices for others—not that they wished to win honors or renown. No, indeed! Their sole motive was to please God and to practice that Christian charity which Christ practiced while on earth.

There was Margaret of New Orleans whose story is so beautifully told in the history of Louisiana. Little Margaret left Ireland with her father and mother, who planned to make their home in America. For a few years they struggled on in Baltimore, but they were stricken by yellow fever and little Margaret was left an orphan. Kind friends gave the child a home, but they were too poor to educate her. She never learned to read or write.

Margaret grew up, married and became a widow. She found work in a hotel laundry in New Orleans. Her own baby died, but there were hundreds of other babies to be mothered, and Margaret's strong, loving arms were extended to them. Yellow fever was still at work, robbing little children of fathers and mothers. The Sisters of Charity could not bear to refuse a home to even one little orphan; but they were poor, and how could they take care of so many? Over her washtub Margaret pondered the question. "I will do what I can to help you," she said to the Sisters.

When her hard day's work in the hotel was done, she went to the convent and worked for the orphans. Her sharp eyes saw that Sisters and children had not enough to eat. "I will beg for them," said Margaret; and every day she made the round of the hotels and collected scraps of food, which she turned into palatable dishes for the hungry children. Often she was seen pushing a wheelbarrow containing the food and clothing she had collected.

Margaret managed to buy two cows, started a dairy

in the convent and began selling milk. Rain or shine, she trudged along the streets, and in her cheap but clean dress, shawl and sunbonnet, Margaret became a familiar figure. More room was needed in the orphan asylum, so a larger house was built. The dairy prospered, and the profits went in large part to the orphans. Margaret was a good business woman, and opened a bakery, which she managed as well as the dairy.

She continued to wear the same old dress and little shawl. She spent no money on herself. Out of her bakery came free bread for the poor; bread at a trifling cost for the asylums; bread for many a penniless, hungry soldier. But the more Margaret gave the more she made. The bread she cast on the waters came back to her. The little bakery became in time the first steam bakery in New Orleans.

Everyone called her Margaret, everyone loved her, and when she died the entire city mourned her loss. The papers announcing her death were bordered in heavy black. At her funeral, Church and State, rich and poor, were represented, but the most touching tribute was the presence of hundreds of orphans who had been befriended by this good-hearted Catholic heroine.

A statue was erected in her memory, and it is a matter of pride to the citizens that the money for it did not have to be solicited. It flowed in so lavishly that the committee soon gave notice that more than enough had been received. If you ever visit New Orleans you may see this memorial.

Love of our neighbor is commanded by Christ, and it is a mark by which we are known as His disciples.

There was once a rich count called Otho, who had a daughter whom he loved dearly. One day the child was amusing herself with some glass beads, with which she

seemed to be much pleased. Her father was sitting by the fire, watching her. "My child," said he, "those are pretty beads with which you are playing."

"Ah, yes, father, they are very pretty and beautiful, and I am delighted with them."

"Well, then," said the father, "take them up and hand them to the poor little girl at the door."

The child looked up into her father's face to see if he was in earnest. One glance told her he was.

"Well, dear child, you may do as you please, but you know that when I ask you to do something it is always because I, who love you so tenderly, see that it is best for you."

The girl, at these words, gathered up the beads, and gave them to the poor girl. Her father said nothing; but he was much pleased at the ready obedience of his dear little girl.

"Now, my child, you will soon see how your father can reward you for that heroic sacrifice you made to please him." Then he took out of a small drawer a little casket from which he drew a beautiful necklace, made of precious diamonds. "This, my child, is for you. I wanted to see if you loved me more than yourself. Take this, then, my dearest little one, and when you wear it, it will remind you that your Father in heaven will reward you with a reward surpassing all understanding in the world to come, if you obey Him in this life, and sacrifice everything, rather than displease Him by breaking His Commandments."

God always measures our gifts, not by what we give, but by the value the gift has for us. He does not care for the gift unless it costs us something. That is a real sacrifice, and doing a charitable act means making a sacrifice.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Visit of God to the Soul

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof." With these beautiful words, children, you receive God in your soul when you go to Holy Communion. God enters under our roof when He visits our soul, when He enlightens us so that we get a glimpse of His Divinity.

Who can describe the great happiness of a soul that has given itself for a long time to the service of God? When Bernard, one of the richest noblemen of Assisi, saw how poor a life St. Francis lived, how he despised the world and loved insults and injuries, he suspected that God must have given great graces and light to his soul. He decided to determine if this was so. He therefore invited St. Francis to supper, and had a bed provided for him in his own room, where a light was burning all night. Both retired and soon each thought the other was asleep. St. Francis rose quietly and began to pray. Raising his hands and eyes to heaven, he murmured with great devotion and fervor: "My God, my God!" and at the same time wept bitterly. He remained thus all night and repeated these same words, "My God, my God," and no others. Bernard was so touched by the fervor of these words that he sold all he had, gave the money to the poor, and joined St. Francis.

St. Francis valued the eternal and infinite Good. He looked upon all things of the world as dross in compari-

son with it. He shut out of his soul the very thought of everything else, in order that the thought of God might grow in him. All his love, all his desires, all his hopes and all his fears were bent upon God. That is why God came and took up His dwelling-place in his soul and filled him with joy. If, dear children, we should do the same, even in a small degree, the same result would follow; we should enjoy a happiness which we would not exchange for all the pleasures of the world.

St. Catherine of Siena had from her early childhood shown the spirit of a nun. Prayer was her delight. Her parents were proud of a beautiful, gifted daughter.

Catherine was permitted to spend much of her time in her own little room, which she called her cell. She even retired for a time to a solitary retreat near the town. At the age of seven she consecrated herself to God. It was, therefore, a great trial to her, upon reaching her thirteenth year, to learn that her parents were arranging a marriage for her. They refused to listen to her protests, but subjected her to many hardships and humiliations to compel her to yield to their wishes. They even closed her little cell and surrounded her with gay companions.

Our Lord, however, counselled her to build a cell in her soul and to keep herself always retired there. Thus she found a peace that no outside influence could disturb. Her sisters and friends tried to beguile her into seeking amusements, to find pleasure in dress, so attractive to a woman's heart; but a brief trial of their way of life was enough for Catherine. Repenting that she had ever yielded to such folly, Catherine returned to her prayers and penances. At last her father was won over by her sweetness and patience.

At sixteen Catherine took the habit of St. Dominic. "Her cell became her paradise," says the historian, "prayer her element, and her mortifications had no longer any restraint." Her days and nights were spent in contemplation, and her zeal for conversions knew no bounds.

Corporal works of mercy drew her from the solitude of her cell. Rejoining her family, Catherine became a familiar figure in the streets of Siena, ministering to the sick, the afflicted, and the prisoners.

Our Lord Jesus, while on earth, once thought sadly how much He loved the children of His heavenly Father and how hard it was to make them understand the great love He had for them. His sad eyes caught sight of a hen passing along the road with her chicks, and Jesus said: "How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not!" So our Lord Jesus Christ loves each one of us and would shield us from sin and harm under the wing of His divine protection. Sometimes we will not seek this shelter; we wish to be independent and go our own sinful way. We learn the lesson of God's love for us from God Himself, who came on earth as man to teach us how greatly He loves us. Jesus, you know, loved us even to the death of the cross. And that same love that we learn from this, the highest possible example, Jesus Himself bids us learn from the smallest of His creatures, a mother-hen.

It was God's love that gave us into our mother's care; it was the love and devotion of our mother that sustained and fed that life received from God. She had great courage, because she had great love. Now what can we render to God for such great love? Love is paid back only in kind; love is repaid by love. Let us, then, give

back to God great love for His goodness in creating us, and to our mothers great love and devotion for their loving devotion to us.

On a beautiful sunny day a mother, whose love had made her over-anxious, tied her toddling baby to her apron-string for safety, while she sat and sewed on the green grass; but the baby broke the string and scampered away. "I did not know my mother's apron-string was so weak," he thought; "I might have done that before." Proudly he stepped out among the daisies, while the sun danced on the little hill and played among the buttercups in the valley below. Of course the little one longed to reach them; but his baby feet were weak. Over the edge of the hill he fell and would have rolled all the way down, but the end of his mother's apron-string, which still hung at his waist, caught in the bushes. At his lusty cries, the mother ran and gathered him in her arms, saying words whose meaning he could not yet fully understand: "My apron-strings were strong after all, baby dear."

So the love of your mother keeps you from harm, though often you do not realize how strong it is. Thus the love of God for us, which is greater still than mother's love, holds us, even if we do sometimes stray away. It keeps us from falling into great sin.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

A True Christian

Children, there is a debt which continuously stares us in the face: the love which we owe our neighbor. St. Peter asked our Lord, "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him—till seven times?"

Jesus answered: "I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times." Thus, according to the words of Christ, we must *always* love our neighbor, if we wish to be true Christians.

As we must always love God, so we must never cease to love our neighbor, for at the very moment we ceased to love our neighbor, we should also cease to love God. He who loves his neighbor sincerely is kind and friendly, not now and then only, but on all occasions; nay, the more good a Christian does, the more his heart expands and he feels that he must do more works of charity. Fire becomes stronger the more we add fuel to it; in like manner, love grows by acts of charity.

Many years ago a little girl living in New York used to save her pennies for the missions. She had a little bank, and now and then she would take it, shake out the savings and count them.

President Lincoln was a friend of this girl's father, and whenever he came East, he called to see his old friend. Sometimes he stayed all night in the big homely house, where little Julia lived with her brothers and sisters. "Sissy" was the President's pet name for Julia, and she was very fond of "Uncle Abe," as the children called him.

One evening as Julia was counting her pennies at the table, Mr. Lincoln asked: "What are you doing there?"

"Counting my mission money, sir," Julia answered.

Mr. Lincoln put his hand into his pocket and offered her a coin.

"Please, Uncle Abe, I can't take it," said honest little Julia. "I have to earn all my mission money myself."

"Oh, I see," said Mr. Lincoln, and he put the coin back into his pocket.

The next day, when he was ready to start for the train, he asked Julia to walk to the station with him. The child ran for her hat, and danced along beside her tall, distinguished friend. Presently Mr. Lincoln shifted his valise from one hand to the other, as if it were very heavy. "I wonder if you could help me carry this bag?"

"Help Uncle Abe? Well, I should say," and Julia proudly took one of the handles.

Arriving at the station, Mr. Lincoln drew out a coin and handed it to Julia. "There, you earned this," he said. It was the handsomest bright penny Julia had ever seen.

"Oh thank you, Uncle Abe," she said, and all the way home she thought how kind this good friend was to think of a way of letting her earn it. It was such a beautiful penny that she did not like to put in into the bank immediately. In fact, Julia wished she could keep it; but that would not be right, she decided. So the penny went into the bank until Sunday, when the child took out her savings and carried them to church. After Mass she attended Sunday school. Possibly she felt a bit sorry at parting with the Lincoln coin, as she gave her contribution to the teacher.

Shortly afterwards a message came for Julia to go to another room. What was her surprise to see her father

and brother and the superintendent there, all looking quite serious and puzzled.

"How much money did you have, Julia?" asked the father.

"Eighty-two cents," replied Julia.

"Are you sure that is all you had? Where did you get this?"

Julia's eyes sparkled at the sight of the handsome coin her father held up. "That's the money Uncle Abe gave me for helping him to carry his valise to the station. My bright penny!" It was a five dollar gold piece! Julia was very happy to learn that Uncle Abe's gold penny meant such a big sum of money for the missions.

My dear boys and girls, are you as zealous as Julia? She was, indeed, a true Christian, filled with the real spirit of Jesus Christ.

He who loves his neighbor according to the example of Jesus Christ will never do him evil, but much good. Oh, if a true, sincere, brotherly love existed among men, we should not see many of the sins, vices, misery and poverty that now exist, while the earth would become a paradise.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

All for God

My dear children, our final aim is not earth, but heaven, in which, after this short life, we are to enjoy eternal happiness. In order to attain this end we must render unto God the things that are God's. There is one Church that God has established, and we must believe all that it teaches. The Catholic Church is our mother; she cares for our future. She provides for our spiritual necessities by preaching the Word of God, and by administering the sacraments. As true children of God we must accept all the Church teaches as the Word of God and hold fast to it. The mouth of the Church is the mouth of Christ. A good Catholic loves his Church as devoutly as ever a child can love his mother.

Elizabeth was a young maiden of sixteen, graceful, resolute and trustful. She had made up her mind to make God known and loved, but she had to leave boarding-school for home. The holy institution within the walls of which she had learned to love God she left with great regret; for to know how to love God is a science which is above all other sciences.

It was on the last day of her school life that a great change took place in her. She appeared more serious; she became conscious that a new life full of dangers was beginning for her; her Communion that morning was more than ordinarily fervent. In her thanksgiving, when alone with her divine Guest, she promised that she would spend her life in winning souls to Him. How?

She did not know, but she felt that God would give her an opportunity.

As though in answer to her promise, the priest, when giving his last counsels to the pupils going home, said: "Go, my children, and sow the seeds of virtue you have received during your school years. Do not be like artificial flowers which charm the eyes only. Be living flowers, flowers of Eden, which by their sweet odor speak of the grace of God; be an influence for good among those you meet. Let your actions be such that those who see you will be attracted to virtue, piety and duty. Sow lilies of charity around you that those who see you may be prompted to devote themselves to a good cause."

Silently, in her heart, the maiden said: "I shall be a sower of lilies."

On the morrow of her home-coming she asked her mother if she might go to Mass every morning. She felt that hearing Mass would prepare the way for sowing lilies during the day.

"But!" said her mother, "is not once a week enough to go to Mass?"

"Oh, mother," she said, "it will make me so happy to go to Mass every morning!" and the permission was granted. Every day she could be seen in church, making a short meditation before Mass began; and each day she came back from church stronger in her resolution to do good and sow lilies of virtue. She was so willing to help and sacrifice herself in order to please others that her father and mother did everything they could for her. The work of sowing lilies had begun.

One Friday morning she found meat on the table and she frankly said that she would prefer not to eat meat.

"But, my child," said the mother, "you know that your

health is far from good. In such circumstances it is not a terrible sin to eat meat to-day."

"Why, my health is so good, mother dear, that I never felt so well in my life." She turned to her father and spoke to him with such tact and tenderness that it was decided the family would never again eat meat on Fridays and other days when it may not be eaten, according to the laws of the Church. It must be said that the other members of the family were not practical Catholics. They had sent her to a Catholic boarding-school because they knew that it was only in such a school that a real, true education was imparted, an education that trains the heart as well as the mind. Her father and mother were more concerned about the things of the world than about their eternal salvation, but their conversion was already progressing, precisely because their daughter had made, and was trying to fulfill, the promise to win souls to Christ by sowing lilies of virtue.

Early in the winter, she inquired about evening prayers among the servants of the house. Alas, there had never been evening prayers among them, and then and there she determined to introduce the beautiful practice of evening prayers in common. So one evening she appeared in their midst and said: "Suppose we say a little prayer for the blessings we have received to-day!" She knelt down and said a short prayer. She was so good, so kind to them that, just to please her, they knelt down also and answered the prayer. Thus the practice of evening prayer was established among these toilers, who for many years had forgotten and neglected their religious duties. The sower of lilies was at work.

One evening the whole family was gathered in the drawing room. Suddenly the young girl took her father by the arm and led him to a room where all the servants

were assembled. What was his surprise when he saw them all on their knees saying their evening prayers. He was much moved by the sight and confessed that he could no longer resist the zeal and piety of his daughter, and henceforth he was a true and practical Catholic. The mother had already yielded to the same influence which virtue and kindness make all-powerful. Thus it was that this pious and devout young girl spent her life in winning souls to God.

Children, every day we should give to God what belongs to God, but there is one day which He claims as all His own, and that is Sunday. Pious, God-fearing Catholics go regularly to Mass on Sundays and on holy-days of obligation. They cannot be kept away, even if they are obliged to make great sacrifices. In the early ages of the Church it often happened that the faithful were taken prisoners by the pagans and led away to martyrdom; but they would rather suffer imprisonment, torture and death, than stop going to Mass on days when they were obliged to attend.

When a certain heathen governor commanded St. Bernard to renounce his faith, he refused to obey him. Orders were then given that he should be placed on the rack. While the saint was enduring most cruel torments, the governor continued to tempt him: "Adore fire and water, partake of the blood of animals, and your liberty will be granted you immediately."

The holy man, with sweet serenity in his countenance, and rejoicing at being permitted to suffer for God's sake, answered: "Neither your commands nor the suffering you are subjecting me to will ever separate me from the love of God and my Saviour Jesus Christ, whom I have served from the days of my childhood to my present old age."

The governor, seeing that he could not shake his constancy by promises or threats, gave orders that he should be beheaded. Children, when we read of the constancy of the martyrs, we should be ashamed of being cowards in the service of God, and should resolve to serve Him for the future with the greatest love and courage.

To love God and to serve Him is the science of all sciences of the world; all the arts and sciences of the world are nothing without the love of God. Oh, how happy mothers would be if they knew the science of the love of God and would inculcate it in their children! Their homes would resemble the home of Nazareth, and sweet peace and consolation would dwell therein.

IXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

A Grain of Mustard Seed

children, many hundred years ago a wonderful ppeared on earth. At the time He appeared in He was about thirty years old. He had not been f before, as He lived in a village not well known province of Palestine called Galilee. His parents were poor people; His father a carpenter. There was no school or college there, no means of getting what is called an education. As far as we know, all the learning had to be acquired there at home. He helped His father at his trade.

Suddenly He appeared before the people as a teacher. In appearance He was a man like other men. He wore a garment, like many others, of coarse material, and went about the streets and roads barefooted. He never wore a covering on His head. His manner was modest and simple, but dignified; for He spoke with authority. With a word He healed all manner of diseases, gave sight to the blind, made the lame walk and the deaf hear, raised the dead to life. Great crowds followed Him.

He gathered around Him some disciples—poor, uneducated men, mostly fishermen. One day He asked them: "Who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter answering said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter was made the rock upon which Christ built His Church, that Church which was to spread all over the

world. My dear boys and girls, how proud should you not feel to belong to that Church and call yourselves Catholics!

Billy White was a poor, crippled boy. He lived with his mother in one of the large towns of New Jersey, where everybody knew him. A mission was going on in one of the churches there. Billy attended it; he liked the fine music and the bright lights. Every night he was there, in a front seat. He went to church more that week than he had ever before gone in his whole life.

One night something happened that Billy did not expect. After saying a little prayer he had learned at the mission, the dear Lord Jesus came into his heart by His grace and so loved him, and so won him, that little crippled Billy became a firm friend of Jesus and was glad to call himself a Catholic. You know that when a boy learns to love Jesus, calls himself a Catholic and is a friend of Jesus, there are some things he may have done which he does not want to do again. Billy White found this out.

The following Sunday morning there was a baseball game in the town and, of course, Billy planned to go there. He had arranged to go before he and Jesus became friends. Sunday came. About noon the street cars were crowded with men and women coming home from the game. They were talking and laughing noisily, forgetting that it was the Lord's day. Billy White got on one of the cars. The conductor who knew him called out, "Well, Billy, what was the score?"

Billy answered in his usual happy manner, "Six to three, but I wasn't there. You know I'm a Catholic and I went to Mass."

The men did not talk quite so loud, and the women did not laugh so much after that. One or two heard the

conductor, when he took Billy's nickel, say to him: "Stick to it, Billy, and you will be better for it." What a wonderful sermon Billy White preached that Sunday morning in the street car of his town! How grand a thing it would be if we had a hundred boys right here in this church like that. This puts some grown men to shame—a little crippled boy is not ashamed to tell a crowded street car that he is a loyal Catholic.

It is a pity that Catholic boys do not more generally seek an education. Whatever the reason is that makes them leave school as soon as they can and go to work, the result is that Catholics have not much representation in learned and professional vocations. Therefore they have not much influence in the government of the country. How do they expect to be able to break down the foolish prejudices that Protestants have about our holy religion? These prejudices do a great deal of harm, because they keep people from knowing the great truths of the Church. These truths, if known, show people how to live right, think right and govern right—truths which are the strongest support and defense of a democratic government such as ours. Now how are we, as Catholics, to help people to know these things if we do not know them ourselves? And how can we know them if we leave school as soon as we have finished the grammar grades, or even before? Perhaps boys have never thought that they have a responsibility to God, to the Church and the country to be just as well educated as they can possibly afford to be. Boys and girls, give this big thought a little consideration.

God put His divine power into the preaching of the Apostles, as He does into the seed of a plant, to expand and unfold, attracting souls all over the world. The Apostles had every difficulty to meet. They went among

strangers, they were penniless: they preached the gospel of self-denial, which was certainly not agreeable to a people eager to enjoy themselves. They told their simple story. The Holy Ghost gave power to their words. They performed miracles to show the truth of the Lord's holy religion. They were scourged and whipped. They were tormented, and even killed. At first the Catholic faith was made up almost wholly of the humble and the poor, the uneducated; but soon the learned, the rich, the powerful became His followers, so that our Lord compared them to the birds of the air that alighted in the branches of a great tree.

St. Theodore was a soldier in the army of an emperor who had issued an edict that all Christians must offer sacrifice to the heathen gods. Theodore declared before his commander that he was a Christian and would not offer sacrifice to the heathen gods. The judge entreated him to renounce his faith and thus save his life; but Theodore made the Sign of the Cross, and answered: "As long as I have breath, I will confess the name of Christ."

After cruel torture he was thrown into prison. At night his cell was miraculously filled with light, and heavenly voices joined him in praising Christ. At last he was condemned to be burned at the stake. He died a martyr's holy death.

Children, we are among the favored ones who have received the gift of faith—a gift from God greater than we should have if we possessed the whole earth. Let your treasure be in heaven, and your heart will be where your treasure is. Do not be satisfied with merely the name of Catholic, but be one in truth and reality.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Laborers in the Lord's Vineyard

My dear children, we are created to work in the vineyard of the Lord,—that is, to live on this earth for a certain time and to work for God—by obeying Him and keeping His Commandments. God has all things. We can give Him nothing except our hearts or our good will. This we do if we live as He wishes us to live. Thus do we work in His vineyard. He will reward us for it when this life is over, by taking us to heaven, there to be happy with Him forever. We are hired for the day, because this life, compared to the eternal life, is but a day; aye, less than a day; at the longest it is soon over.

Children, why can we not all enter, heart and soul, into God's service, and find our joy and delight, even in this world, in doing God's will, in little as well as great things? For in little things do we not show that we are in earnest, and honor God more, perhaps, than in what appears greater?

In your Bible history you read of the boy Samuel. His good mother promised God that her son should serve Him alone. She gave him to the high-priest, who lived in a room on a side of the church. He gave Samuel a room on the other side. At night there was a lighted lamp hanging in the church. While Samuel was sleeping, its light grew dimmer and dimmer, until it went out at dawn. Then would Samuel run to the great doors of the church, and throw them open to let the sunshine

in. That was his work: opening the doors in the morning, closing them at night, and taking care of the lamp.

One night the priest was lying asleep in his room on one side of the church, and Samuel was asleep in his little room on the other side. It was dark and all was quiet, when suddenly a great voice rang through the church calling: "Samuel, Samuel!" and Samuel, thinking it was Eli the priest, calling him, went and asked him what he wanted. But Eli said, "I did not call you. Go to sleep."

Then again the voice called: "Samuel"; and again he ran to the priest. "Here I am," he said, "for thou didst call me," and again the priest answered: "No, I called not, my boy, go and lie down."

And again the voice called: "Samuel, Samuel." This time he knew there could be no mistake; he went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for I am sure you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord had spoken and he told Samuel, if he heard the voice again, to say: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Samuel went back to his room and lay down, and soon God's voice sounded again, calling, "Samuel, Samuel." Little Samuel, kneeling down said: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Then God spoke to him, and told him what He wanted him to do. Was not that wonderful, to have God come and talk to a little boy?

God is as near as that to every one of us. We cannot hear Him calling as Samuel did; but He hears us and wants us to work for Him just as Samuel did. We cannot all open church doors, or take care of church lamps; but we can assist others in many ways for God's sake. One thing I want you to remember about Samuel: he was obedient. The first thing he learned in the house of

God was obedience. The first thing that every one of us ought to learn is obedience to God and our parents.

God is our sovereign Lord and Master; but He would rather have us look upon His will as that of a tender and loving Father and so do His will with a childlike spirit. Moreover, we have the happiness of knowing that, when we are doing the will of God, we are working out our salvation; for God has made our eternal happiness in the next world depend upon doing His holy will in this.

There was once a very prominent army officer who had a boy about fifteen years old. They lived in the suburbs of New York, to which the father went every day. One morning, just before he left for the city, the officer told the boy to be at Brooklyn Bridge at noon, and to wait for him there. Then the father left. He was so busy all day that he forgot about the boy. When he reached home late that night, his wife met him at the door and said, "Where is Henry?"

"Good Lord!" said the father, "he may be waiting at the bridge. I told him to meet me there at noon, and forgot all about it."

He hurried back to the city. It was almost midnight when he reached the bridge. It was raining and cold. But there was Henry, who had waited all day because his father had told him to be there. That boy afterwards became a great soldier. He always said that the best thing he ever learned was obedience.

When Samuel had grown up he was talking one day to a young man who had disobeyed the Lord. He said to him, "To obey is better than to sacrifice." What he meant was that God would rather have our obedience than anything else we can give Him.

Children, with all our hearts let us say: "Lord, as long as I live I mean to obey Thee and faithfully keep Thy Commandments. I know I cannot do this without Thy help; but Thou art always ready to help me, and I shall call on Thee for that help every day and every hour. Thus I have confidence that I shall never abandon Thy vineyard, but shall be working in it when the day,—that is, my life—comes to an end, and that I shall receive my wages,—that is, eternal life. I mean to keep a grateful heart for so great a favor, and to praise and glorify Thy name as long as I live."

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

The Power of the Word of God

Children, the seed of a plant or tree is wonderful. Look at it. It is very small; but it has wonderful power. In the ground it gathers moisture; swells, expands, takes nourishment from the soil, grows, produces leaves, flowers and, at last, fruit—each seed according to its kind.

The Word of God is like seed. It is planted in the mind of the hearer. It makes an impression which may appear faint; but it has power. If the truth it conveys is forgotten, it will revive. It forces its way and grows; it influences our lives, turns us from evil and inclines us towards good. Jesus says: "My word shall not pass away. Heaven and earth may pass away, but my word shall not pass away. Man liveth not by bread alone, but by the word of God."

In the state of Ohio there lived a man with his wife and little girl Mary, who was just seven years old. The father was not getting along very well, and when the great North-western country was opened, he went to North Dakota and secured a farm in a very lonely and out-of-the-way place. When he came home and told his little girl that they were going to move far away, she asked at once if there was a church there. You see she loved to go to church. Her father said there was no church there. Then she asked if it was possible to hear Mass and go to Sunday-school.

He answered, "No."

"Is God there?" she asked, and her father did not know what to say. When they had moved all their things to the railway station and were ready to leave the old home they could not find the girl. They hunted for her, and at last found her. And do you know where they found her? They found her in her own room, now all bare and empty, and she was kneeling in a corner with her face to the wall.

Her mother, who found her, heard her praying, and this is what the little one said: "Dear God, we are going to North Dakota, and there is no Mass there, there is no Sunday-school, no catechism there, and there is no God there; good-bye, God, good-bye."

With tears in her eyes the mother knelt down beside her little girl and asked God to send a priest and a church to their new home, and to remain there Himself with them. So they went away to their new and lonely home in the far West. Now what do you think happened? Within five months they had a little church, erected by the Church Extension Society, and the people for miles and miles around came to Sunday-school and Holy Mass.

You can imagine how happy the little girl was when she felt that God was so near. The priest was much pleased when he heard of the brave little girl and he thanked God that He had heard her prayer.

As our divine Lord stood on a hillside one day, preaching to the people, he saw a man in a field nearby sowing his seed. Our Lord pointed him out to those who had eagerly gathered around Him to listen to His words and He said: "Behold the sower went out to sow his seed." With the thought suggested by these words our Lord taught the people. He took the texts of his sermons from the things He saw around Him—the same simple,

common things you and I see every day. Once a field of lilies gave Him His text: "Consider," He said, "the lilies, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin, but I say to you not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these." Once a sparrow, a little bird of which we do not think very much, gave our Lord a text. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" our Lord said (no doubt there were many flying around then, as they do to-day, and they were each sold then for half a farthing, equal to three-eighths of a cent): "Not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father knowing it; fear not, therefore, better are you than many sparrows."

In all things of the earth Jesus saw the heavenly message of the Creator, almighty in His power, boundless in His love. Jesus teaches us to see the hand of the Father in the world around us. Alas, most of us have eyes that do not see, or that see only a small part of what there is to be seen.

Once a vessel was nearing the rocky coast of England. A group of travelers stood on deck, eager for a sight of land. Out in the ocean a light-house appeared above the horizon, and though the vessel was still far from land one man exclaimed with joy: "At last."

"It is only the light-house of the cape," said another traveler; but the other answered: "Ay, but my wife and little daughter lit that light we see."

To the others it was only a light-house, like many another they had seen before. To this one man, however, it was the brighest light in the world, for behind it he saw his wife and little daughter toiling up the long stairs to trim the wick and make it bright. Children, this is simply a picture for those who see God in His works.

Do you know that the sermon of the sower in the field is very interesting? Our Lord tells us as plainly as He can that there is a springtime of life for all children, just as there is a springtime of the year. It is the time of sowing. Your parents, teachers, pastors and friends are sowing good seeds in your heart and mind. It is, therefore, your part to see that these seeds take root, to keep them from flying away with the passing winds of distracting thoughts. This is much like the sermon our Lord preached from the text of the sower he saw passing to and fro, for He said: "The sower went out to sow his seed, and some fell by the wayside and the fowls of the air devoured it." So the seed may be good and the sower may do his best; but if we let the seed go to waste, our minds will be barren and produce nothing good. But if you willingly listen to the words of your teachers you will receive the seed on good ground, and it will yield fruit a hundred-fold.

After every sermon you must say to yourself, "I am going to be more obedient, I am going to study my lessons harder, and above all, remain away from bad companions." What good will it be if you see in a looking-glass that your face is dirty, but do not wash off the dirt? So it is with your soul when it is soiled with sin, but you do not go to confession.

"Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Jesus' Sufferings and Our Sufferings

Our mother, the Church, dear children, sets apart a certain time of the year to contemplate what Christ has suffered for us. She tells us to withdraw even from lawful pleasures and amusements, so that we may think of heaven and find a means of getting there. Next Wednesday ashes will be put upon our foreheads; old and young alike will have the Sign of the Cross imprinted on them. No one knows which of them will first return to the dust, but in a short time all will have done so. The season of Lent is a time for us to review the life, sufferings and death of our Lord.

St. Casimir was the son of a Polish king. Raised under the care of his pious mother, Elizabeth, the young boy grew up amid holy surroundings. As a flower turns to the sun, so his heart turned ever to God.

His greatest delight was prayer. He was especially devoted to the Blessed Virgin. To her he commended the purity of his soul. In his tender years he made a vow of chastity, and this vow he kept faithfully until his death. The splendor of the royal court tempted him neither as a boy nor as a youth. He preferred to be with Jesus in prayer, in self-denial, in mortification, in charity. In order to serve Him he wore a penitent's hairshirt under his costly clothing. At night he slept on a hard floor in preference to a soft bed. Early in the morning he arose and said his prayers. Then he went

to Mass. Often the sexton found him kneeling on the hard stones. At Mass he was filled with such devotion that one felt, when seeing him, as if he were looking at an angel. After the Holy Sacrifice he remained in church so long that his father had to send messengers to call him to meals.

He ate so little that he kept almost a continuous fast. "The kingdom of God is not food and drink," he said. The poor shared his meals. He permitted them to come into the court of the royal palace and gave them alms with his own hands. Grown to manhood, Casimir found more pleasure in visiting our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament than in dancing, playing and hunting. He often rose in the middle of the night to go to the chapel and pray.

Rich children, who have an abundance of drink, fine clothes and amusements are in great danger of becoming idle, vain, proud and selfish, and thereby suffer a loss in their spiritual life. Casimir, the son of a king, has become a model for all rich children, teaching them not to give their hearts to the passing pleasures of this world, thereby losing the eternal joys of heaven.

My dear boys and girls, nothing stands still, everything must either go forward or backward. This is true of our minds and our souls as well as our bodies. But while we all love to move our bodies, some of us are very slow to move our minds and our souls. Activity, however, is the law of life for them, too, and if we do not want to have dead minds and souls, we must keep them moving also. How do we keep our minds moving? By making them think. You know how much pleasure and how much profit a lazy fellow loses. One's mind must be wide-awake if he is going to live a life worth living. He must always be adding something to his

fund of knowledge. That is why we go to school for so many years. Boys who left school early would now be glad to come back and start all over again if they could. They would study a great deal harder and longer than they did when they had the chance.

Now this wonderful springtime is also the season of Lent: a springtime for the soul. Do you give your soul as much chance for activity as you give your body? When we try to overcome a bad habit and form a good one, we are pushing out the old wrong activity with the new right one. Suppose you like to lie in bed in the morning compelling your mother to call you again and again. You must make up your mind that you are going to change that bad habit. You begin by getting up at the first call. That goes well for a few days, but there comes a morning when you feel you "just can't get up," and you fall back into the old habit. If you are really alive in your soul, you will say: "Now this won't do. I am going to try again." You do. By repeated effort you at last form so strong a habit of getting up at the first call that you no longer have any temptation to stay in bed. Here you have effected a change that shows your soul is vigorously alive.

Now, at the beginning of Lent, boys and girls, you should make the resolution to change just a little bit for the better before Easter comes. Just as the freshness of spring is coming all about us, so we shall have a new spring of fervor and effort in our hearts and souls. There is no better penance than this. This is really what we promise to do every time we go to confession. A firm purpose of amendment is necessary for obtaining absolution. But we often make the promise too lightly. We do not seriously make up our minds to keep it. Let us strengthen this purpose of amendment this Lent. Let

us make an extra effort to conquer at least one bad habit, to overcome it with a good one. Lent will then be a very blessed season for us, and God will be much pleased and glorified.

My dear children, I am sure you will all make this resolution; but it is going to be hard to keep it, and you will fail if you try to do it alone. The trees, after their inactivity in winter-time, need the hot sun to make them blossom. Take a hint from this. Bring your heart and soul, made unfruitful by bad habits and sin, to the warmth of our Lord's love in Holy Communion. Make your confessions more carefully, be truthful to the Holy Ghost, and soon the twigs of effort will begin to bud, the buds will swell and burst into full blossoms of good habits. Before you know it a new and pious life will have replaced the old impious one. St. Paul says we must suffer with Christ if we would share His glory. If we do our part, not counting the cost to ourselves, seeking God's help in the sacraments, we shall find ourselves wonderfully happy in the days to come.

Children, suffer a little now by effort and penance, that you may not suffer forever, banished from the kingdom of God.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Back Against the Wall and Fight

My dear boys and girls, you have just heard how Satan tried to tempt our divine Lord. Why did Jesus allow the devil to come near Him? For our sake He was tempted, that He might taste all the bitterness that belongs to our nature, except sin. The loving Jesus wished to assure us that He understands what our fight with the devil and temptation means, and that He is at all times willing to help us win the fight.

Without an enemy how could we be soldiers of Christ? Without a battle, how could there be a victory? It is God's will that we be tempted, in order that we may resist, and thus show ourselves worthy of His love. If we could do just as we pleased, without any opposition, how could we show our faithfulness to God? Children, without temptation where would be the merit, the premium, the reward? You are tempted to steal, to cheat; the seventh Commandment tells you not to do so. You have to put up a fight against every sin, and as a good soldier you will use your weapons: prayer and the sacraments.

I am going to tell you something about St. Zita, that very humble but very great saint. She was in the army of Christ and, like a brave soldier, she fought Satan with all her might. She rose early in the morning, recited her prayers devoutly, and attended Holy Mass. At meals she was satisfied with a little. In fact, she fasted strictly

most of her life, and did many other works of penance. Though she suffered much from her mistress and fellow servants (she was only a poor working girl), still she overlooked their cruel treatment and repaid their insults by doing acts of kindness for them. All her sufferings she united with those of our divine Lord, and no matter what humiliation she had to endure, she never changed the sweet tone of her voice, nor her gentle, quiet ways. We should all try to imitate St. Zita in her wonderful self-denial. There are so many opportunities of being kind to those whom we dislike, so many priceless chances of showing our love to God a little more than we have ever done heretofore.

In large cities there are parks, in some of which there are zoos, where you can see wild animals, brought from all parts of the world. There are the panther and lion from the wilds of Africa; the bear from the north; zebras from the African plains; the huge elephant from the East. A little boy one day went to the zoo with his father; seeing the lion the boy left his father's side, ran to the animal's cage, and in a playful way teased the animal. The great lion shook his mane, furiously pawed the cage and would perhaps have broken out and harmed the boy had the guard not arrived in time and soothed the beast. The daring little fellow was quite frightened and held fast to his father's hand the rest of the visit.

Let us render loving obedience to our good Father in heaven, let us beware of trifling with sin, and of playing with the devil. That great destroyer of souls is caged by God's grace. He cannot harm us unless we invite him to do so. It is easy to trifle with small evils, they seem so little. At first we hardly call them by the ugly name of sins; finally we grow familiar with them and they do not seem dangerous at all.

There is a story about a man who was interested in snakes. Many snakes are harmless. Some are only slightly harmful, while the sting of others is deadly. This man boasted he could handle all kinds without harm to himself. He had trained them and knew how to manage them. They would wind themselves around his arms, they coiled around his legs, they seemed quite tame and friendly. But one day, however, one turned on him and bit him. He would have died of the serpent's sting but for the timely aid of a doctor.

So it is with us. Do we not often court danger when we call our negligence a little thing and not dangerous? "Oh, that is nothing," we say. Perhaps it is only a small lie that hurts no one, only a little uncharitable remark, or we may be a little late for Mass. Alas, little by little, the habit gets a hold on us, encompasses us, masters us and we no longer rule our wills. That which at first we held well in hand turns on us and would cause our death, were it not for the great doctor, our Lord, who will heal our souls if we persistently call on Him. An evil habit is not acquired in a day; but little by little, by repeated acts. "Sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."

I read about a little girl who repeatedly jumped into bed with her night prayers unsaid, trusting to say them comfortably nestled under the blankets. Of course she would fall asleep before they were well begun. Thus she fell into the habit of omitting her night prayers and daily examination of conscience. Had she knelt by the side of her bed she would have kept awake and said them. One night she realized that the habit was mastering her, for it became increasingly difficult for her to say her prayers. By God's grace she broke the bad

habit, jumped out of bed, and knelt right down and devoutly said her prayers.

The wild animals we find caged in the zoo cannot do any harm unless we dare to molest them. The hunter who goes out to hunt the tiger and the leopard runs a risk that we do not run. In like manner there are dangers that we shall not encounter if we avoid meeting them. This is what the catechism means when it says that we must avoid the occasions of sin. True, there are some temptations we cannot avoid; they beset our path. Life is but a journey; there are flowers by the wayside, but also poisonous weeds, roses and, alas, thorns; sweet singing birds and death dealing reptiles; but neither thorns nor weeds nor dangerous animals can hurt us if we hold fast to our divine Father's hand.

We must imitate our Lord in overcoming the devil. He is our captain, and under His command, if we only fight bravely, He will surely lead us on to victory.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

A Race for Heaven

On a certain occasion Jesus took three of His friends up into a high mountain to give them a glimpse of heaven. He wanted to show them what all those who are faithful to Him may expect. His face did shine like the sun and His garments became as white as the snow. Those who beheld Christ thus transfigured were so overjoyed that they said: "Lord, let us stay here."

Children, do you know why our Lord did this? He wanted to show the glory of heaven, so as to give us courage to suffer the hardships of this life in order to gain this glory. Our Lord explains that in order to gain eternal life we must be willing to endure all that God asks of us, even to giving up our life and suffering martyrdom, if God so ordains. To encourage us He offers the glory of heaven.

One day a little boy presented himself before the king of Cochin-China who was persecuting the Church and Christians. He threw himself on his knees before the king and asked permission to speak. The permission being granted he said: "O King, cut off my head with your sword, that I may go to my country."

"Where is thy country?" asked the king.

"It is in heaven," replied the child.

"And where are thy parents?"

"They are gone home to heaven, and I want to follow them. O sir, give me a stroke with the sword and send me there too."

The king was struck with admiration at the faith and courage of the boy, but refused to grant his request. We may hope, however, that this child received from God the glory of the martyrs, on account of his great desire to become a martyr.

While we labor for our temporal life, we must not forget to labor also for our eternal life. Religion obliges us to keep the Commandments of God and the precepts of the Church. The child who obeys God and His Church, who prays, and hears the Word of God, and receives the sacraments worthily and often, labors for eternal life.

We read of two saints, St. Elzear and his wife, St. Delphina, who all their life had a great desire for heaven. Elzear received supernatural favors from God, which led him to despise the world and live for heaven alone, desiring no goods but those of eternity. He faithfully observed three maxims: to avoid the smallest things displeasing to God; to offer himself fervently to God every moment; and to conceal in his heart all heavenly favors. He recited the Divine Office every day, fasted often, and wore a hairshirt beneath his rich garments. He and his wife often passed the night in prayer, and received many divine revelations. Elzear lived in such constant union with God that he was never without the desire for heaven. Whether at table or engaged in conversation, or at amusements and musical entertainments —amid all these attractions his mind was so entranced by the harmonies of heaven that he would fall into an ecstasy. He assembled his household every evening to talk to them of heaven and eternal truths, thus enkindling in his hearers an ardent desire of perfection. Elzear declared himself the advocate of the poor, heard their complaints at all hours, and pleaded their cause at court.

After Elzear's death, Delphina sold their large estates in Naples for the benefit of the poor, reducing herself to the necessity of living on alms.

St. Paul referred to the spiritual race for heaven when he said: "So run that you may obtain." What, then, are the qualities of a winner? First you will note endurance and perseverance. Without these qualities no race can be won in this world, nor that for the next: you must keep up the effort to the end. Winners are not always talented, but they are industrious and use the best that is in them.

Opportunity comes to all. God gives ability of one kind or another to all, and to those who ask for it, He gives the help necessary to win a school diploma or an athletic prize, as well as the heavenly reward. One of the reasons why there are so few winners in this world is that they do not try; they do not so run that they may obtain. Another reason is that nine out of ten do not ask God to help them.

There is a story of an eminent Catholic judge named William Gaston, who as a boy, was always first in his studies. Another boy, who was dull, asked William how it was that he knew his lessons so well. "I will teach you," said William, "the prayer my mother has taught me to say, and then you will do your lessons just as well." A little later the two boys were discovered with their heads together. William was teaching his friend how to ask God to help him to be a winner.

Children, there are Catholic boys and girls in the world who do not work for heaven. They utter curses and blasphemies; they do not go to Mass on Sundays and holydays; they are disobedient to their parents and grieve them; they hate their companions and cheat whenever they can. They eat meat on Fridays and other days of

abstinence; they do not go to confession and Holy Communion. And why do they not work for heaven? Simply because they never think of heaven; they never say to themselves: "It is good to be in heaven." The saints did not act that way.

Now I am going to tell you about St. Dorothy, who was a young virgin. She fell into the hands of very bad men who hated the Christians. She was stretched upon a rack, and offered a brilliant marriage if she would consent to sacrifice to the heathen gods, but death, if she refused. She replied that Christ was her only spouse, and death her desire. She was then placed in charge of two women who had fallen away from the Faith, in the hope that they might pervert her; but the fire of her own heart rekindled the flame in theirs, and led them back to Christ. When she was again placed on the rack, Sapricius, the Governor, was amazed at the heavenly expression she wore, and asked her the cause of her joy.

"Because," she said, "I have brought back two souls to Christ, and because I shall soon be in heaven rejoicing with the angels."

"Blessed be God," she cried, when she was sentenced to be beheaded, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, lover of souls, who dost call me to paradise, and invitest me to Thy nuptial chamber."

The thought of the joys of heaven should encourage us. In all our toil and sufferings let us say frequently: "It is good to be in heaven."

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

The Dumb Devil

When the devil takes possession of your soul, my dear children, because you commit a mortal sin, you turn away from God and place yourselves in the power of God's enemy. You become a slave to this enemy. The devil puts before you the bright side of sinful pleasure. You know very well that this is leading you on to eternal ruin. You hear sounding in your ears the Commandments: "Thou shalt not tell a lie"; "Thou shalt not steal"; "Thou shalt not commit impurity." The child knows the justice of God will overtake him if he does these things, yet he does them. He is in the devil's power. The boy or girl thus becomes a slave of the devil, and does just what his evil master orders. The only way to have this devil cast out is to heed the voice of Christ speaking in the breast of every boy and girl, to ask fervently and persistently for His grace. You must pray that this horrible demon of mortal sin may be cast out.

A certain wealthy man was on the point of death. Seeing that he could not recover, he sent for his lawyer and witnesses so that he might draw up his last will. When they approached his bedside he said these fearful words, "My body I leave to the earth, from whence it came; my soul I surrender to Satan, to whom it belongs." All those around the bedside, after hearing this terrible sentence, thought that the dying man had lost his senses. But he continued: "I still have the full use

of reason. Disease has not yet disabled me, I know the full meaning of all I am saying; yet, I repeat, my body I leave to earth, my soul to Satan." Though his friends used every effort to put him in a different frame of mind, the unfortunate man still persisted and said: "My whole life has been devoted to the service of the world, God had no part in it. How, then, can I now offer Him my worthless soul? More than that, here before you all I bequeath to Satan not only my own soul; but also the souls of my wife and children. It was to please them that I procured my ill-gotten wealth; to please them that I can not hope to see the face of my God." Shortly after he pronounced these terrible words the unhappy man died in despair. Thus, children, perish many poor souls who sacrifice their eternal salvation for the sake of the pleasures and goods of this world.

The devil who possesses one in mortal sin makes his victim dumb and paralyzes his tongue, so that he cannot speak the right words. He can speak well enough about that which is sinful: he blasphemes, curses and swears; he is able to speak indecent words; he can talk about money-making and cheating; but he is dumb about everything spiritual. In regard to God he is silent. He has nothing to say about Him, nothing to say to Him. God should be the object of his adoration and love. He is the glorious Creator of the universe and of us. He has given us all we have. He preserves us every moment of our lives. When everything earthly passes away He remains, and is just as near to us as ever.

But the one in mortal sin is dumb and silent to all this. He does not like to think of God, for he knows that he is living in a state of rebellion against Him. He does not want to speak of God and render Him the homage due Him. He lets months go by without invoking the

name of God. God warns him to turn from his evil ways, but he is deaf to the Lord's voice, and he is dumb, so that he makes no prayer. Yet prayer is his only help. If God does not help him, who will? What should he do? When he hears the voice of the Holy Spirit within him, let him obey and pray earnestly and heartily for forgiveness, and he will be heard. His speech will be restored, he will pray with his lips and his heart, and the dumb evil spirit will be cast out.

One day a holy monk was favored by the vision of an angel guardian walking at his side. As they were going along they came upon the carcass of a dead animal lying by the wayside. The stench which came from it was so great that the good man could not endure it. He put his hand to his nostrils, and hurried past as fast as he could. The angel, however, did not seem to be affected. After a little while they met a young man dressed in fine clothes, and of very good appearance. When the angel saw this man he expressed great disgust, and hurried to get past as fast as he could, keeping his eyes turned in an opposite direction, that he might not see him. The monk asked the angel why he seemed to feel so much horror at sight of this handsome youth, whereas he showed no signs of disgust when he passed the hideous corpse of the dead animal. The angel answered: "The stench and the sight of the dead animal were indeed repulsive; but if you might recognize, as we angels can, the frightful state of that young man's sinful soul, you would die of terror."

Let us, dear children, present ourselves to Jesus in humility and with earnestness, and ask His help. He will drive out the dumb devil, restore to us our righteous speech, and we shall praise and glorify God here and for all eternity.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

The Bread of Everlasting Life

Children, our holy mother, the Church has a very special purpose in having the Gospel of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes read to-day. She wants to direct our attention to the most Holy Eucharist in preparation for the great feast of Easter. You are all expected to approach the Holy Table in this holy season.

In our days Jesus works a still greater miracle than He did during His stay near the Sea of Galilee. He feeds not merely five thousand people but many millions. He feeds all Catholics who approach His table of grace. He gives us the bread of everlasting life, which nourishes the soul and infuses into the mortal body the germ of immortality and glory.

Every Holy Communion we receive should be most worthy. We must approach the Holy Table with faith, fear and love. We must believe that the Sacred Host, which the priest gives us in Holy Communion, is truly Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God; that the Sacred Host which to our senses appears to be bread is in reality not bread, but the God-man, Jesus Christ—the same Jesus Christ that once lived upon earth, and now sits at the right hand of God in heaven; that nothing remains of the bread but only the form; finally, that Jesus Christ is there in His *living* presence, with all His divine and human attributes.

My dear boys and girls, whenever you go to Holy Communion you should be filled with faith and say to yourself: "I am now before Jesus, my Lord and my

God. I will now receive into my heart Him before whom Peter on his knees exclaimed: 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' I will receive Him whom the heavenly spirits adore, with the greatest humility."

St. Piammon, a holy priest, was one day favored with a vision. As he was saying Mass he saw an angel of God standing at the side of the altar, having in his hand a book and pen. When the time came for the people to go to Communion, he saw the angel preparing to make entries in the book, and as Piammon gave Communion to the people, the angel followed him, writing down the names of some but leaving out those of others. When the Mass was ended, Piammon asked the angel why he wrote down only the names of some and not of all communicants. "Some of those you left out," he said, "seemed to me even more fervent than those whose names you registered."

"Know, then," said the angel, "that I wrote down the names of those only who received Communion worthily. Satan wrote down the names of the others in his book, as an accusation against them when they appear before Jesus Christ. Those whose names I left out, and whom you thought to be so fervent, were hypocrites, who, by their pretended devotion, sought to deceive the faithful; but on the day of judgment their evil deeds will be made known to the whole world."

At Holy Communion we are in the very presence of the living God. How were the people not filled with fear when Christ manifested His divine power by a miracle! It is very natural that we should approach the altar filled also with fear. This is very beneficial, because it urges us to communicate with a pure conscience and with profound veneration.

From her infancy Blessed Columba led a holy life. At ten she made a vow of chastity, and when her parents tried to change her resolution, she proved her determination by cutting off her beautiful hair, thus making herself look ugly. The Holy Eucharist was her one desire and almost her only nourishment. If her Communion was delayed, she fainted from exhaustion, and her life seemed in danger. Her confessor, fearing delusion, asked her how she was able to live on the Blessed Sacrament alone. "When I receive this heavenly food," she replied, "I feel so satisfied in soul and body that all desire for earthly food vanishes, and I have a horror of it. I hope that before long God may give you a sign which will remove your doubts." On Christmas day, as this priest finished his first Mass, he felt a wonderful refreshment of body and soul. When he had said his third Mass this heavenly rapture had reached such a height that he felt it impossible to touch food, and he fasted through the day. When this was revealed to Columba she said, "I rejoice, Father, that you now know by experience how I can be wholly satisfied by the bread of angels."

It is truly a most solemn act to receive into our hearts God, who is holiness itself. In order to receive Communion worthily, we must be pure and holy. We must endeavor to the best of our ability to cleanse our heart from every stain of sin. It is absolutely necessary that we should be free from every mortal sin. Any one who knows that he is in mortal sin and dares to receive Holy Communion, commits an awful sin, a sacrilege.

Remember, then, my dear children, to prepare yourselves always by a good, sincere and persistent confession for the great privilege of receiving our dear Lord into your hearts.

PASSION SUNDAY

Our Lord, Model of Humility and Meekness

My dear boys and girls, on this Sunday, which is called Passion Sunday, Jesus appears as a model of humility and meekness. This was shown when He told the Jews that He was the Son of God from all eternity. Instead of falling down and adoring Him they took up stones to cast at Him. And how did Jesus meet this insult? Jesus, who had the power to command the earth to open and swallow the blasphemers, hid Himself and left the Temple. The Sacred Heart of Jesus knows no revenge; It beats with love, meekness and pardon.

Humility and meekness keep the soul calm and tranquil; they make us act with sympathy and kindness toward our neighbor; they banish all harshness from our words and actions.

At the time of the cruel persecution of Diocletian, St. Apollonius, a monk, who was well known for his holy life in the desert, very devotedly consoled the suffering Christians and comforted them in their misery. The pagan crowds flocked to his prison, to revile and insult him. Philemon, a celebrated flute player, was the meanest of the rabble. He tried to exhaust the saint's patience with mockery and jeers. "God help you, my son," said Apollonius, "and lay none of these words to your charge." This was all he said, but the meekness of the saint struck Philemon to the heart. He confessed Christ,

persuaded the judge that he was in earnest, and took his place by the side of Apollonius.

Later, the judge himself was converted, after he had tortured Apollonius. He reproached the saint as a deceiver; receiving no response but a prayer for his conversion, the judge ordered Apollonius to be burned alive. But in answer to the fervent prayer of the saint, rain extinguished the flames, and the persecuting judge, at the sight of the miracle, by God's grace, became a martyr. He was led before the prefect of Egypt, and condemned to be thrown into the sea at Alexandria, with Philemon and Apollonius.

When the prefect of Egypt sent orders that Apollonius, with his converts, was to be led in chains to Alexandria, he chose the most brutal and savage officers to execute his commands. These men were not moved by the news of the miracle. But Apollonius spoke to them on the way, and with such love that they too, confessed Christ and were martyred with their prisoners. They were conquered by the spiritual strength of a man who had learned to overcome pride by practicing the virtues of meekness and humility.

The beautiful example of our Saviour teaches us how we should behave when others persecute us, censure us for things we have done, or accuse us when we are innocent. Those who are of this world, therefore worldly in their thoughts, retaliate in an un-Christian manner. With such it is "tit for tat," "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Calm denial or dignified silence is the Christian answer. Words bring on quarrels, quarrels may cause bodily injuries, perhaps even bloodshed and a jail sentence. Do not act like the Jews who, when assailed, began to throw stones. An accusation which you should ignore causes great anger and ruins your

entire spiritual life. Half the sins of this world would never be committed if only the lesson of this Gospel were put into practice.

A woman went to a priest to complain of her husband's passionate temper and angry words. The priest, who knew that her anger was easily aroused, gave her a small bottle of pure water. "Take this," he said, "and the next time your husband is angry, take a mouthful and you will soon learn its value; for your husband will remain quiet." An opportunity soon presented itself, and she followed the advice; the same thing happened a second and a third time, with the marvelous results that were promised. Returning to thank the priest for what she considered "miraculous water," he said: "There is no miracle in the water; it is your own tongue that has done the good work, by preserving silence. The water's only merit is that it forced you to be silent, for you were unable to talk while you had your mouth full."

When you are blamed for anything, children, either by your companions or your parents, accept the blame with charity and gentleness. Such action has the best effect. "With a spoonful of honey," St. Francis de Sales says, "you will catch more flies than with a barrel of vinegar." We have our own faults, and you may be sure there is much in us that is disagreeable to others. But if our companions must bear with our faults, is it not just that we should bear with theirs and treat them gently?

Fight, therefore, against all feelings of anger, ill-humor and impatience; say and do nothing contrary to meekness. Be meek in order to gain the hearts of your companions. Never forget that others must bear many burdens on your account.

Thank God for every slight and injury you have to

bear. An injury borne in meekness and silence is a true victory. It is proof that we are good soldiers of Jesus Christ, disciples of that heavenly wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable.

Children, let this prayer be constantly on your lips: "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto thine."

PALM SUNDAY

"Ready to Fly, Ready to Die"

God sends everyone of us out to fight the battle of life, not single-handed, but with the most powerful forces at our command to support us and make victory almost sure. It is an uncertain battle only when we do not call upon these forces at the right moment. These forces are far more numerous than those General Pershing commanded, or Marshal Foch moved like pawns in the World War. St. Paul tells us that the forces we are sent out to conquer are not material but spiritual; and that we can only combat like with like. God, who commands us to wage continuous war against the "powers of darkness," places at our command the armies of heaven, the hosts of angels led by the warrior angel, Michael, whose name means "Who is like God!" the battle cry which drove the proud Lucifer and his followers, who had dared to think themselves like to God, from heaven. Yet do we not every day fight and fall before these "powers of darkness," in the form of laziness, self-will, dishonesty and disobedience, just because we go forth single-handed, trusting in our own strength, entirely neglectful of the great forces ready to aid us at a mere word of command?

Children, many of you do just this foolish thing; many of you never realize how much it means to be able to command the angels to victory. We have already spoken of St. Michael, the warrior angel, on whom we may call,

whose very name spells victory. No one who constantly, in thought and deed, holds God in His rightful place, can ever sin; for to sin is to prefer strange gods (money, fame, pleasure, people, self) before God. St. Michael will help us against sin. He is said to have appeared at Mons leading a heavenly army so vast that the Germans thought themselves outnumbered and did not push on to Paris. He also stands ever ready to fight with us for God.

In your Bible history, children, you are familiar with the beautiful story of Tobias and the angel Raphael, as told in the Old Testament; it cannot be told too often, for it always suggests something new. Tobias was a good man who devoted himself to the service of God, prayed much and did many acts of kindness. He helped the poor; and often left his dinner to bury the dead. Yet God allowed a great misfortune to befall him. Through an accident he became blind and poor besides. Many people would have cried out: "How could God do this to me?" But not Tobias. He did not think himself worthy of a miracle to preserve his eyesight or his fortune. He tried to think of a way to mend his fortunes, and determined to send his son on a journey to ask for payment from a man named Gabel, who owed him money. The boy, however, did not know the way. Tobias prayed and soon a young man came, offering himself as a guide. The father thanked God and placed young Tobias in the stranger's charge, bidding his son to follow and obey his guide.

The journey was not without its dangers and difficulties, but the unknown guide was equal to every occasion. Young Tobias came out triumphant, through obedience to his orders. Great was the rejoicing in the home of Tobias over the son's return with a wife and prop-

erty, but greater still was the joy when the father's sight was restored by the use of a remedy proposed by the strange guide. Overcome with gratitude, Tobias asked his son how they could reward the stranger for all he had done for them. What would he suggest? The worthy son of such a father replied that the half of all they had would scarcely seem enough.

When, however, they approached the stranger and begged him to accept half of their goods as a faint token of their gratitude, he said: "Bless God in heaven and confess him before all living, for he had mercy upon you. . . . When thou didst pray with tears and bury the dead, and leave thy dinner, and hide the dead in thine house by day and bury them by night, I did bring up thy prayer before the Lord. And because thou wast accepted with God, it was need that temptation should try thee. And now the Lord sent me to heal thee. . . . For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven which stand before the Lord."

Tobias and his son fell upon their faces at these words, terrified to think they had been so intimate with one who ever looks upon the face of God, but the angel reassured them, saying, "Peace be unto you, fear not."

If we pray like Tobias, God will also send us this traveling companion to save us from perils and show us a sure way; and let us not fail to be grateful, like Tobias.

The great angel Gabriel brought a message to the Blessed Virgin: "Thou shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus." This message tells us that we have not only the angels to fight with us, but God also, our divine Victim on the altar, our daily bread in Holy Communion. We are indeed mad if we go out to fight the hosts of evil single-handed, when we might be armed with the strength of God. Jacob saw angels

descending and ascending in a dream, bringing God's message of love to him and carrying his message of love to God. This is a true picture of the daily task of our angels. Jacob caught an angel in his arms and wrestled with him, saying, "Thou shalt not leave me until thou bless me." Jacob won out in that wonderful wrestling match and was blessed by the angel. We shall also have the angels' aid if we ask it.

In prayer, children, you can wrestle with the spirits of darkness and win out, too. In your daily tasks and struggles the heavenly hosts will work and fight with you, if you but say the word. If God be with you who shall be against you?

You have all heard of the great Georges Guynemer, known as the "Ace of Aces" among French aviators. Guynemer was a delicate, girlish-looking fellow, who was not credited with the physique required to play a man's part in the world or in the war. But he found his opportunity in aviation, where his courage, quickness of perception, poise and energy more than made up for lack of strength. His motto was: "Be always ready; ready to fly and ready to die."

In this spirit Guynemer examined his plane thoroughly each day to assure himself that it could be put into action in an instant. In the same spirit he examined his conscience, embraced every opportunity to go to confession, and kept himself ready for an instant summons from his great commander, God. His story is one of marvelous victories and escapes. He said to the priest to whom he made his last confession: "To-day for me, to-morrow for Thee." Only sure of to-day, he put into the day's work his entire energy. Someone asked him what cross he would gain next. "The little wooden

cross," was his reply—the cross that would mark his grave as a Christian soldier. And he did!

My dear boys and girls, I would like to see you "ready," ready for work, ready for play, ready to live, ready to die as God commands. To-day is ours: God has given it to us. Let us make the most of it. The boy or girl who uses to-day to the best of his or her ability will be a victor through life.

EASTER SUNDAY

To Rise With Christ

Christ is risen, my dear children, and all nature sings its wonderful hymns to Him. The birds, in their gay song, tell us that all is being made new in the whole world, with the return of spring. Little leaves are sprouting on the vines, boughs and bushes; a new green veil is spreading over all the gardens; all things are being restored and renewed once more by the power of God.

We may sing with all creation and greet our risen Lord; for we too must be made new, even as the world around us. Perhaps, children, you are thinking of a new dress or a new hat which you will put on for Easter; but what is the outward attire, if the little one be not made new within? Long ago St. Paul said: "Put on the new man." What did St. Paul mean? How can we put on new men and women and new children? St. Paul himself explains, for he says: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Surely if you so imitate Christ, our risen Lord, as to be like Him, you will, indeed, be new children, very unlike your present selves. This is what Lent means: by penance, prayer and patient control of ourselves, we become new creatures for Easter day, and only then shall we have part in the wonderful renewal of all things.

We all like new things; let each one of us then, try to become a new Alice, a new Mary, a new John, a new Charlie,—entirely new, shedding the old self as the tree

sheds its leaves. This is patient work and means effort day by day; but then you know, growth is slow. You, my dear children, are all growing; strive to become good Christians. If your mother has rose bushes in the garden, she props them up with strong stakes, tying them fast to these straight sticks lest they grow crooked and unsightly when they put on their new leaves and bloom. Even so the Church, your teachers, your parents, all those who love you, bind you fast by rules, that you may grow up straight. Be not cross under these laws; they are all meant to help you grow upward, straight and strong, when you put on the new life.

In the life of the holy martyr, Pamphilius, we read that many pagans who saw the great joy that filled the Christians when they were condemned to die for Jesus Christ, wondered how they could be so happy. When they were told that it was because they were soon to see God in heaven and enjoy the happiness He had prepared for them, the pagans also wished to become Christians, that they might share in that happiness.

They had not long to wait for the martyr's crown; for the prefect of Caesarea, hearing of what had taken place, sent soldiers to bring them before him. One of the first questions he put to them was: "What country do you belong to?"

"Our country is heaven," was the answer; "it is there where our God and our Saviour dwells. After He suffered and died and finally rose again from the dead, He went up to heaven to prepare a place for us. Heaven is our home."

The prefect was very angry at the tone of confidence with which they spoke these words, and commanded them to suffer the most inhuman tortures before being put to death.

A teacher one day had a heart-to-heart talk with one of his pupils. This pupil did not like the teacher of his class, so he "played hookey," deceived his parents, wasted the money spent for his schooling, and his opportunity for becoming a capable and educated man. His friend, the teacher, was trying to make him see the pity and sin of all this. The boy admitted the sin; he admitted that he ought to return to school, but all he would say was, "I don't want to," as if that were an obstacle that could not be overcome.

Now when there is anything disagreeable that we have to do, we are apt to feel and act that way. But if our Lord had said, "I don't want to" in the dark hour of His agony, where should we be now? There would have been no redemption, no heaven for us. What did our Lord say instead? "Father, not my will but thine be done."

Christ was obedient for us unto death, even to the death on the cross. Our attention is called to the boundless extent of His sacrifice for us and what loving obedience requires of us. Holy Scripture adds a little more to this: "Wherefore God hath also exalted him and hath given him a name which is above every name."

This was the crown of our Lord's obedience. So too will our heavenly Father crown our obedience. Children, may the happy Easter come to all of you, which must come to those who, looking at the Passion of our Lord, make up their minds to do what they ought, even if they do not want to.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Peace of God

Our blessed Lord came down from heaven, my dear children, and became a little Child. After He grew up to be a man He led a very hard life on earth. Once He said: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He often slept on the bare ground. He lived simply, and was frequently hungry and thirsty. He was tired always, traveling on foot. He was hated and despised. But in spite of all this He enjoyed perfect peace. Do you know why? He was without sin, His soul was constantly united to God. The will of God was His will. This same peace He wished His disciples when He appeared to them after His Resurrection.

A light-hearted shepherd-boy was tending sheep one bright spring morning, in a flowery valley between wooded hills, singing and skipping about for joy. The prince of the district, who happened to be hunting in the neighborhood, saw him, called him, and said: "Why are you so peaceful and happy, my dear little fellow?"

The boy, who did not know the prince, replied: "Why should I not be happy and at peace with the world? Our most gracious prince himself is not richer than I am."

"Indeed!" said the prince. "Tell me what you have."

"Why," replied the boy, "the sun in the bright blue sky shines as pleasantly for me as for the prince, and the hill and the valley are as green and blooming for me

as for him. I would not give my hands for a hundred thousand crowns, and I would not sell my eyes for all the jewels in the prince's treasure-chamber. In addition to this, I have a clear conscience, I say my prayers every day and try to do the will of God as well as I can. I have all that I desire, because I never wish for anything more than I require. Can you say that the prince has more?"

The good prince laughed, made himself known to the lad, and said: "You are right, my good boy; and the prince agrees with you perfectly. Continue to be peaceful and happy for the rest of your days."

"What salt is to food, peace is to life." The best dishes do not taste well when salt has been forgotten, so also, good health, great riches, honor and reputation do not constitute all the happiness in life. What an unhappy home in which father and mother do not agree! As soon as they open their eyes in the morning they are angry; they quarrel from morning till night. Children, if there be a happy life it is a peaceful life. Nothing contributes so much to render life sweet and agreeable as peace.

St. Francis Salano hated quarrels as a boy and was always putting an end to disputes. He once threw himself between two fighting playfellows, and bore their blows till he forced them to stop. On another occasion, by his earnest begging, he made two fighters put down their swords. When the plague broke out in Mansilia, Spain, his devotion to the sufferers nearly cost him his life; on recovering he escaped the gratitude of the people by sailing for the American mission. His ship was wrecked at sea. During the disaster Francis found time to instruct and baptize many of the negroes on board. In Peru he was again an apostle of charity and peace;

he stopped duels, healed the feuds of the Spanish settlers, and taught them forbearance to the conquered race. With the gift of tongues he was understood at once by different Indian tribes, of whom thousands were baptized. A sermon of his so stirred the hearts of the wicked people of Lima that they put on mourning and did public penance. His zeal renewed the faith of the land, and warmed it with the charity of Christ.

The blessing of peace shows itself when we share the joy and sorrow of our companions, sharing happiness and pain like the members of one large family. Sympathy unites hearts, while want of sympathy separates them. Oh, how it does hurt to see those who are near and dear to us care nothing about our welfare!

There was a little girl whose name was Louise. One evening after her good mother had tucked her into bed and kissed her "Good night," she said: "I was a peacemaker to-day, mama."

"A what, dear?" said her mother, who had never heard her use that big word before.

"A peacemaker," said Louise, "you know what that means, don't you?"

"But how were you a peacemaker, Louise? I did not know that you had seen anybody quarreling."

"Oh, it was nothing like that," said Louise, "it was just that I knew something and did not tell it."

Then, of course, her mother knew that her little daughter had heard some mean story about one of her friends and had kept it to herself. In the same beautiful way, you and I, like little Louise, can be peacemakers. We can stop bad stories by not telling them. We can kill bad thoughts by not thinking them. We can bury bad feelings by hiding them. We can be silent about the bad, and think and speak and feel only about the good.

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." These words show how dear to God is the cause of peace, since our Lord pronounces those who promote it blessed and declares that they are the true children of His heavenly Father. Peace with God and peace with one another. Whoever, therefore, promotes this twofold peace by converting a companion to God, or by healing or preventing quarrels among men, inherits this blessing, and shows himself to be a true disciple of Jesus and a child of God.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Lord Our Shepherd

Jesus, in to-day's Gospel, my dear children, tells us of a shepherd whose business it is to take good care of his sheep and whose mind and heart are in his work. He knows his sheep, each one of them; he looks after their ease and comfort; he is never at rest until the entire flock is safe. It warms our hearts to see the good shepherd coming out into the field, calling as he approaches, while the whole flock, pricking up their ears at the sound of the voice they love so well, come scampering across the field to meet him, bleat out their satisfaction in their own expressive way and rub up against him. It does us good to see him count them, to find out if any are missing and examine each one to discover if any harm has befallen it. If he finds one lame and suffering, how tenderly he goes to it and says, "Poor fellow!" calls it by name and binds up the wounded limb. He goes ahead of his flock and leads them out to a green pasture with a brook of fresh water running through it. We love such a man and he loves us, because he has a kind and warm heart, only too ready to do kindness to any one who needs it, at all times.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, who knows His sheep. "I know mine." Our Lord calls us His own—"mine"—and so we are. We are His by creation, but His also for a stronger reason. Our Lord made great sacrifices for us. He came down from heaven and took our flesh

and nature upon Himself. For our sake He lived a poor and hard life here for many years. At last He laid down His life on the cross. Now, one loves particularly what one suffers for. A mother, for instance, has a sickly and delicate child, a cripple. This child causes her pain for a long time, but if this child dies, she feels the loss all the more keenly because of her suffering. So the Lord remembers the pain and death which He endured for us; that is why we are so dear to Him.

We can all be shepherds in our own way, guided by the grace of the Good Shepherd, like St. Peter Claver, of whom I am going to tell you something. St. Peter was a very saintly boy and among his companions he shone as the leader in acts of charity and self-sacrifice. Later, as a priest he was sent to the great slave-mart of the West Indies. There he consecrated himself by vow to the salvation of those ignorant and miserable creatures. For more than forty years he labored in this work. He called himself the "slave of slaves." He was their apostle, father, physician and friend. He fed and nursed them in their loathsome diseases with the utmost tenderness, often applying his own lips to their hideous sores. His cloak, which was the constant covering of the naked, though soiled by their filthy ulcers, sent forth a miraculous perfume. His rest, after his great labors during the day, was a night of penance and prayer. However tired he might be, when a fresh slave-ship arrived, St. Peter immediately revived, his eyes brightened, and he was at once on board among his dear slaves, bringing them comfort in body and soul. When Easter came St. Peter left the town to search the mountains for the negroes who might be scattered among them. The tropical storm drenched him to the skin; but he

never turned or stopped. When he found a settlement he would never leave it till the last negro was brought to the Sacrament of Penance. Once he suddenly left the house where he was staying, and plunged, without a guide, into unknown mountain recesses. None knew whither or why he went; but when he returned, pale and worn, it was discovered that he had gone to give the last sacraments to three old negroes who, abandoned by the world, had crawled into a ruined hut to die.

My dear boys and girls, we, as faithful followers of the Good Shepherd, must do His bidding and carry out His plan of work. Through the Holy Catholic Church He feeds His sheep with the bread of His divine word and in Holy Communion with His own flesh and blood. But His love goes still further; He offers His life for His sheep, dying for them on the cross.

We must feed our souls with Holy Communion; this is the best and most nutritious food. It is Holy Communion that increases sanctifying grace, weakens evil inclinations and fortifies us with supernatural strength to overcome all temptations. Children, be not hirelings who let their sheep hunger and languish; be good shepherds and feed your souls. Go to Holy Communion as often as your confessor considers you worthy.

Let us be good shepherds of our own souls. The soul is the most precious treasure we possess; for it is created in the image of God and destined to enjoy eternal life in heaven.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

A Little While

This life, my dear children, lasts only a little while, compared to eternity. If we should live a hundred years, what would it be? A mere dot on the horizon of the great ocean of time. Ask a man of eighty what he thinks of the length of his life. He will tell you that it has gone as if it were a single day, like a cloud that flits across the sky. Our Lord, speaking of this short time, referred to His sufferings and death, and called it a little while, just a moment.

The more sorrow you have to suffer the greater shall be your joy. The truth is, life is full of crosses. Children, you have to study if you would know something. At the end you will find that even with the greatest diligence you know little or nothing. Our Lord rightly chose a life of suffering as His example to us; for life means suffering. For bearing misfortunes the way of faith is the best. When trouble comes one's first thought should be of God. He has allowed it. God loves me; that is my faith. It is hard; I must pray, then, for patience. But I know that it will help me. It will make my salvation and eternal joy easier to attain.

St. Aloysius had been ill for a long time; his physician, seeing that death was approaching, told him that he could not live more than eight days. After the doctor had left the room one of the saint's friends came in.

"Oh," Aloysius cried out with great joy, "do you know the news? The doctor has just told me I cannot live more than eight days. Oh, come let us sing a hymn of joy to thank God; the danger of losing my soul will soon be past."

He then wrote a letter to his mother and said:

"My dearest mother: I have good news to give you to-day, and I am sure you will rejoice with me. I am now near the end of my life, near that time when there will no longer be any danger of losing my soul. As for myself I look upon death as the greatest blessing God could bestow upon me, and I ask you to join me in thanking Him."

We enjoy temporal goods, such as money, honors and dignity just a little while. How perishable is beauty—just like a flower, which to-day appears in all its splendor, to-morrow withers and falls to the ground. How fickle are riches. They take wings to themselves and fly away. They may be taken from us by thieves or lost by some mishap. How foolish we are if we damn ourselves for the sake of the vain goods of this world.

In my travels through the West I met a boy, only about thirteen years old, who was dressed like a soldier.

I said to him: "Why, young man, how does it happen that you are a soldier?"

"I'm not a soldier," he said very proudly, "I am a scout."

A scout is taught to be manly, to serve his country, to love God and to do a good turn every day. He is also taught a thousand and one useful things in connection with his military training. But the great principle he has to observe is to do a kind act every day.

The motto of the scouts is, "Be prepared." It is a good motto. If you are going to do the world's work,

you must have steady nerves and strong muscles. If you are going to help God make the world better, you must fit yourself for service and be ready when He calls. Jesus was thirty years getting ready to do three years' work. See to it that you do not waste your play-days; but cultivate a strong body while you are a boy. Do not waste your school-days, but make your mind strong before it is too late. Do not waste your church or Sunday-school days, but prepare a strong heart, conscience and character, so that you will be ready when God calls you, as He surely will. Do not be afraid of that call; be sure you are ready. "Be prepared."

When St. Teresa was a little girl, not more than seven years old, she used to spend much of her time reading the lives of the saints with her little brother Roderick. The thought of eternity made a deep impression upon their young hearts, and they were never tired of repeating these words: "Forever, forever, forever! What! shall the blessed see and enjoy God forever!" When they read the history of the monks and hermits, they wished like them, to abandon the world for God. They tried to build themselves little hermitages in their father's garden, but naturally, being young and weak, they were unable to finish them. The history of the martyrs filled them with the greatest delight. It seemed to them that the martyrs had purchased heaven very cheaply, since by short sufferings they had secured eternal joys. They wished they could do the same. One day Teresa and her brother set out from home and left the city, intending to make their way to the country of the Moors and become martyrs. As they went along praying with great fervor, they were met by one of their uncles, who brought them back to their mother. She was in a state of great distress. Teresa did not escape without a scold-

ing; but almighty God was, no doubt, pleased with her innocent fervor.

Take, then, your cross upon your shoulder, children, and carry it courageously with Jesus; your heart will rejoice and jour joy no man shall take from you.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

A True Soldier in God's Service

Children, we must all be zealous in promoting the honor of God, our king and Lord, do all we can to make Him better known and loved. We must, therefore, be firmly and lovingly attached to our holy mother, the Church, support her rights, defend her against her enemies and shun no sacrifice to advance her best interests. Do we not owe our true and saving faith to her? Is it not the Church that continually instructs us in the divine law (though reproving and punishing us when we sin), in order to save our souls? Does she not administer the sacraments, through which we become saints? Does she not daily offer up for us the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and petition God for every grace we need for all time or eternity?

It is indeed a great honor to serve God; for if we consider the infinite majesty of God, we may say that the poorest man, though he walk in rags, occupies a higher rank than the soldier who belongs to the army of an earthly king.

As true soldiers in the service of God, we must carefully shun whatever is contrary to the dignity of that position. Children, you are unmindful of your dignity when you give way to your passions, when you are self-willed, quarrelsome, jealous or act in any other ungodly manner. You dishonor God, whose soldier you are, and compel Him, because of the insult which you offer Him,

to deprive you of your dignity. Let us never forget who we are, and in every temptation say to ourselves: "I must not, I will not, do this; it would disgrace me as a soldier in the service of God."

A certain bishop was a great missionary in the South Sea Islands. When he landed on an island to address some words of peace to the savage natives, they killed him before he could speak, put his dead body into an open boat and sent it out to sea.

He was a brave, good, strong man, and brave, good, strong men are made out of brave, good, strong boys. He was one of the best baseball players in his college. After a game which his team had won, the boys were merry, and soon began to tell silly jokes and use bad language. At last Jack—that was what they called him—could stand it no longer. He rose and said clearly, in manly tones: "I must quit the team if this talk goes on. I'll not share in it, and I'll not listen to it. If it goes on, I must leave the room at once and resign from the team." And he did. Now you know what that meant; for he was the best player. They gathered round him, pleaded with him not to leave and promised that they would never again annoy him with their bad language and unclean stories. He returned thereupon and led the team to many a victory.

A Catholic boy who is ashamed to do right, to tell the truth, to shun bad companions, to protest against bad language and all meanness is a coward, and the boy who is not ashamed to do right, even if he must stand alone, is a hero, a true soldier in the service of God.

As true soldiers of Christ, we must defend the honor of our Lord and Master. If any remarks are made in public, injurious to His honor, we must defend Him. We must honor God in our hearts, rejoice at the honor

and homage given to Him in heaven and on earth and wish that He may be known, loved and praised by all men. We must honor Him in public and private worship, joining in prayers at home and in church. Whenever we hear the name of Jesus we must bow our heads most reverently. We honor God by setting a good example to our fellow-playmates. St. Francis of Assisi, whenever he found a piece of paper on which the name of God was written, carefully picked it up and preserved it in his cell with great veneration.

Off in a far away corner of India a missionary had gone to baptize sixty or seventy men and women and receive them into the true Church of God. During the course of the service, the missionary noticed a boy about twelve years of age, sitting in a corner of the little church, looking very much interested and listening most attentively. After the missionary had baptized and received into the Church the grown-up converts, men and women who professed their faith in our Lord Jesus as their Saviour, the Father was surprised to see the boy come forward and stand in front of the rail.

The missionary said to him: "My lad, do you also want to be baptized and go to Holy Communion?" The boy said: "Yes, Father." The missionary looked at him lovingly and said: "But you are very young, and I know nothing about you; no one has taught you anything about the Christian faith. After a while you might grow careless and indifferent. Perhaps it would be better for you to wait."

The boy said nothing, but returned to his seat with a sad heart. The missionary saw that he was very much disappointed. After a while a man stood up and said: "Why, Father, this boy has taught us all we know about Jesus." What he said proved to be the truth. That boy

had learned the Gospel and the catechism at a mission school in a distant village and had returned to his heathen home to tell the story of Jesus to his people. He read to them out of the New Testament until they gave their hearts to God and were consecrated to Jesus. So you see this little lad was a true soldier in the service of God, a young missionary. I am sure that if boys and girls were to love Jesus and live as He would like to have them, be kind, obedient and true, they would do more for Him than they could if they were able to preach great sermons. Many a father and mother were led back to God by their own little boy or girl.

Be mindful, therefore, of the great dignity you possess and fulfill your duties conscientiously, so that when the time for your departure comes, you will be able to say with Jesus: "I go to Him that sent me."

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Song of God's Goodness

My dear children, God is near us everywhere; everywhere He hears the sighs of our hearts; everywhere He pays attention to what we say to Him. You may walk on the street and pray. You may be in your class-room and offer up your soul to God. You may pray at home. God despises no place; He requires only a devout soul. The patriarch Jacob prayed in the field, Manasses in a dark dungeon, Ezechias on a sick-bed, Daniel in a lion's den, Jonah in a whale's belly, Job on the dunghill, the three young men in the fiery furnace at Babylon. The prayers which were offered in these different places were acceptable to God and were heard. Jesus Himself gives us a beautiful example; He prayed not only in the Temple at Jerusalem and in the synagogues, but also in the desert, on the mountains, in the Garden of Olives, and especially on the cross.

Prayer, my dear boys and girls, is the first duty of every Christian. It is a command of God, but besides that, it is a great privilege, an honor to be allowed to speak so freely to the Divine Majesty. A king of this earth does not allow his subjects to approach his person, nor to make their petitions known to him, except through his officers of state; but we may at all times approach the King of heaven, adore Him, thank Him for His goodness, and tell Him all our wants, both of soul and body. And what is most consoling is that

He is always glad to receive us, always ready to hear us and always willing to help us; whilst earthly kings often refuse the worthy petitions of their subjects.

St. Oswald was the son of a king. His heart and soul were daily united with God in prayer. When he had grown to manhood he collected an army to recover his father's lost throne. On the eve of battle, Oswald set up a great wooden cross, before which he and his army knelt in prayer. That night St. Columba, in a vision, assured him of a victory which really came.

St. Aiden, who joined St. Oswald on his missions, labored and prayed with him, and their work was crowned with great success. Oswald loved to sing the office with the monks in choir. After all the monks had gone, he would remain through the night, in prayer. At the same time he attended most carefully to the needs of his subjects and won their hearts by his charity. On Easter Sunday, when sitting down to a banquet, he was told that a crowd of poor people was begging at the gate. He at once sent out a silver dish full of meat, and ordered the dish itself to be divided among them; whereat St. Aiden, who was at the table, taking the king's right hand, said: "May this hand never perish!" The prayer was answered. When Oswald fell in battle a few years later, his right hand and arm remained incorruptible.

By prayer St. Oswald recovered his lost kingdom, converted his subjects, and became a saint. How much can we not effect through humble, persevering prayer!

As long as a Christian prays with fervor and devotion, he leads a good life. Temptations may be numerous, but he stands firm; for as the stake supports

the little tree, so prayer supports him. But if he becomes careless in his prayer, or neglects it altogether, he totters and falls. Children, pray always; for prayer is most necessary to keep God's grace and continue in virtue. God should be the beginning and end of our thoughts and actions. Not a morning should come, not a night settle upon the earth, without seeing every Catholic boy and girl speak to the Sacred Heart of our Blessed Lord, praying for all who are exposed to danger, praying that God's holy will may be done, praying that all Catholics may be faithful to the sacraments, praying that God may rule all the councils of those who govern us, praying that all those outside the Faith may see the light of God's Church and follow it.

Do not think for a moment that it is childish to pray. Never be ashamed to get down on your knees in the morning or at night, even when others are present, to pray to God. If any boy or boys make fun of you, they are cowards, not you; for they laugh because they would be afraid to do what you are doing. Never believe a boy or a man who says he does not believe in prayer. He does believe in prayer; but his evil life, the fear that if he began to pray he would have to be better, leads him to boast untruthfully that he does not believe in prayer. The greatest heroes of the world's history and our own country were men who loved prayer and were not ashamed to pray. Washington prayed publicly at Valley Forge. You remember the picture of him, kneeling in the snow and barren wilderness, a short distance from his waiting horse. To-day Congress is opened with a prayer.

We are bound to one another in the communion of saints; God places the treasures of His heavenly

riches at our disposal because He wishes us to help one another. Prayer is the chord of love by which we are bound, one to another and all to God; and the touching of it sounds more surely the song of God's goodness and God's power in our hearts. Therefore, begin to pray to-day and continue to pray every day, for our country and for all mothers and fathers, that God may direct, help and comfort them all.

Children, pray with confidence; rest assured that God will hear you, if the object of your prayer is His honor and your salvation. Be not discouraged when your prayer is not heard at once, but keep on till it pleases God to hear you. If you pray thus, you pray well. Jesus said: "Ask and it shall be given unto you."

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Children of Satan

Our Lord calls liars "children of Satan." Nothing wounds the soul more and is a greater disgrace to it, than a lie. Even he who lies is ashamed of this vice, for he hates to be called a liar. God is eternal Truth, my dear children, and hates a lie. He gave man a tongue to tell the truth. A watchmaker puts hands on a watch to tell the time or give the correct hour of the day. According to God's purpose, the tongue is, as it were, a hand to tell what is in the heart. When you tell a lie, the tongue becomes a false hand and does not fulfill the duty for which it was created. What would happen if the eye should tell the hand that glowing coals are roses, if your sense of smell should make the taste believe that poison is not dangerous, or if the eye should tell the feet that a hill is an ordinary road? Would not the whole body suffer a loss? Would not such a body be an insult to the Creator Himself? The same may be said of a lying tongue; it is not only a dishonor to itself, but it robs God of honor due Him.

A little boy of nine was weeping bitterly one day. He had committed a fault by taking something which his father had told him not to touch. He was afraid that his father would learn it and punish him. The servants of the house who saw him weeping and knew the reason for his tears, said to him: "If your father

asks you if you took it, you have only to deny it, and you will not be punished."

But the good child, looking at them with indignation, answered: "What do you tell me to do? Tell a lie about it? No, never! I would rather be punished a thousand times than think of doing such a thing. I will never commit such a sin. I do not claim the devil, who is the father of lies, as my father." This should be the answer of every Christian child.

You must not tell the smallest lie even if telling it would save the whole world; for it is better that the world should be destroyed than that God should be offended. Much less, then, should you tell a lie to save yourselves from a scolding or a beating, which is soon over, and is, moreover, intended for your own good. If you have done wrong, be sorry for it; then you are soon forgiven by God and your parents, whereas if you try to hide it by a lie, you are guilty of a fresh sin, one often much greater than the first.

St. James, Bishop of Nisibis, traveling through the country one day was asked for some alms by a beggar, to bury a companion who had just died by the wayside. The Bishop gave him an alms and went on, praying for the poor man's soul. The beggar, laughing at his success in imposing on the saint, ran back to his companion, who was lying on the ground, pretending to be dead. On coming to the spot, he called to his friend to get up, as the trick had been successful, but received no answer. He drew nearer to arouse him, but what was his horror on finding that his friend was really dead. Immediately, with loud cries and lamentations, he ran after the saint, and throwing himself on his knees before him, acknowledged the deceit which they had practiced, and implored the

saint's pardon and intercession. The servant of God, having first reproved him for his sin, knelt in prayer, and the unhappy man who had provoked God to punish him was restored to life by the prayers of the saint and became a sincere penitent.

Children, to tell a lie to excuse yourself is an act of cowardice, and shows weakness of character. This may well cause us to fear that such a soul will soon fall a prey to the devil. Be always, then, my dear children, most exact in telling the truth, and pray God to give you a great love for this excellent virtue, which is so pleasing to Him. Remember that if you love and tell the truth, you are in a special manner the children of God, who is the divine Truth.

St. Paul tells the Ephesians to put on the girdle of truth. That is the first thing a man wants to know about a boy. Is he truthful? It is the one thing we want to know about every girl. Does she always tell the truth? A great educator once said that it did not make any difference how ignorant a child was; he could be taught. It made no difference if he was ill-mannered; he could learn to be a gentleman. The child that cannot tell the truth is hopeless. There is nothing upon which to build. It is like laying the foundations of a house on sand; it will not stand. So, boys and girls, when you go out to fight the battles of life, be sure, first of all, that you wear the girdle of truth.

Yes, dare to be truthful! Be brave enough to tell the truth; for it is an act of true courage. Your parents or teachers may punish you, but they will respect and trust you; the saints and angels will look down on you with approval; God will hear and reward you. Nothing can require a lie, because nothing can excuse

it. What is more contemptible than a liar, whose word is never taken, whose denials are never believed, whose promises are never accepted? On the contrary, what is more noble, what more amiable, than a child who is always candid, truthful and sincere? Such a one, wherever he goes, carries with him the esteem, confidence and respect of everyone.

Detest a lie, my dear boys and girls; for no matter how insignificant it may be it is always bad in the mouth of a Christian, who ought to esteem truth above all things. Lying causes a great deal of mischief among men, and brings shame and disgrace upon the liar. Make a resolution always to tell the truth and say with Job: "As long as breath remaineth in me, neither shall my tongue contrive lying."

PENTECOST SUNDAY

The Spirit of God

When God created Adam and Eve, my dear children, He breathed into them a living soul. Likewise, when the priest baptized you, he breathed upon you and commanded the spirit of evil to leave you and "to give place unto the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete"; and at these words the Holy Ghost brought your soul to life which, without this grace of God, would have remained dead in original sin.

In Confirmation this Holy Spirit came upon you to bring you a renewal of this life of grace and to melt your heart with the warmth of His love, that you might have power to do good and resist evil; for He is the Spirit of love, and love is a great power.

A little boy, after he had received Confirmation, said to the priest, "I am now a strong and perfect Christian." Children, by the grace of God's Spirit, if you do not resist Him, you will indeed become perfect Christians. If you do not resist the Holy Spirit, but follow His soft voice, breathing inspiration into your souls, you will awaken to a new life, and you will do great good as you pass through life, carrying the brightness of hope into the lives of others and singing merrily the song of the Spirit, the song of love. Because we have a free will we can resist His voice and turn a deaf ear to the inspiration of the Spirit dwelling within us. In order that this may

not be, we should often pray to the Holy Ghost for guidance. We pray to our Father, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, to our Lord Jesus, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, but alas, we often forget the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, whose presence is as needful to the soul's life as the air we breathe is necessary to the life of the body.

The good St. Lucy, on being scornfully asked by the governor of her city, "Is this the Holy Ghost in you?" calmly replied, "They whose hearts are pure are the temples of the Holy Ghost." "But," persisted the wicked man, "I will cause you to fall into sin, and the Holy Ghost will leave you." To which the virgin responded, "And I, remaining faithful to God, will not consent to sin, that thus the Holy Spirit may double my reward."

Then the tyrant had her dragged to a place of infamy. But as no power on earth could move the pure virgin to commit sin, she was brought back again to her wicked tormentor, to whom she said, "You see now that I am the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that He protects me. Nothing evil can happen to me unless He permits it."

The governor ordered a fire to be kindled around the saint. The fire, after oil and resin had been poured on it, burned fiercely. St. Lucy remained unscathed, and even when a sword was buried in her heart, she did not die at once. After she had been transfixed by the sword, a priest came to her, bearing her divine Spouse in the Blessed Sacrament. She received her Love under the Eucharistic veil, and then went to behold Him forever, face to face.

Children, let us, like St. Lucy, avoid sin. Only

thus shall we become temples of the Holy Spirit and make ourselves fit for everlasting companionship with God.

On the Feast of Pentecost the disciples "were all together in one place," and as they sat in prayer, "there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat on every one of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." From that moment, these men were strong and able to labor and suffer and die for Christ.

As strong Christians, we must use our strength to remain strong and become stronger. You know how our soldiers were trained at the camps before they went "over there" to fight for our country. They were not accepted unless they were well and strong, and then they were trained, that they might become stronger. So with us the Holy Ghost makes our wills strong; but if we do not train those wills by choosing to do what is good, even if it is difficult, and by refusing to do what is evil, even if it is hard to refuse, we shall not gain in strength; indeed our souls will not grow at all, but will soon die, in spite of this "Gift of God" in Confirmation. You know that we cannot be confirmed again, so let us cherish this presence of the Holy Ghost within us, saying to Him many times a day: "Come Holy Ghost, O God, descend. Come, Holy Ghost, from heaven send Thy beams of radiance bright."

At an early age St. John of the Cross was well drilled in piety. As a child he slept on the floor, and rose early that he might serve at Mass before going to school. People were moved to devotion by seeing his very pious conduct before the altar. Unable to learn a trade, he became the servant of the poor in

the hospital at Medina, while pursuing the sacred studies. At the age of twenty-one he was ordained a priest and became the first prior of the barefooted Carmelites.

In his last illness he chose a very poor convent to die. The journey to this place was very long and tedious. The fatigue of the trip irritated wounds in his leg, causing him intense pain; yet the prior locked him up for three months in a little cell, and forbade him any relief. Here he lingered, till released by the provincial, a few days before his death, when the stern prior was himself moved by his invincible patience. Then the saint prepared with joy to die and, crucifix in hand, with the words "Glory be to God!" on his lips, he embraced death. Children, St. John said: "Live in the world as if God and your soul only were in it; so shall your heart be never made captive by any earthly thing."

Children, let us shun sin, walk in humility, fervently practice the Christian virtues and pray with attention, fervor and devotion, that the Holy Ghost may abide with us and bless us, both for time and eternity.

TRINITY SUNDAY

A Wonderful Sign

The blessed Trinity, my dear children, is the greatest mystery of our holy religion; we owe to it every blessing,—our creation, our redemption and sanctification. That is why we should adore the blessed Trinity every day of our lives. We may comply with this duty in some measure by signing ourselves with the Sign of the Cross. The early Christians made the Sign of the Cross very often, at every step or movement, whenever they went in or out of their homes, while they were dressing themselves, or when they went abroad, at table when the lights were brought in, lying or sitting down; no matter what they did, they called on the blessed Trinity by making the Sign of the Cross.

When we are tempted to sin, when evil thoughts arise in our minds, when we are in danger of giving way to any temptation, let us at once make the Sign of the Cross. At the sight of the cross the devil is frightened away. The cross was stained with the Precious Blood of Jesus; that is why it is the source of every blessing. The Church, therefore, never gives her blessing without making the Sign of the Cross; even when the priest gives the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament, he does so in the form of a cross.

Saints Bonosus and Maximilian were officers in the "Herculean" troops, who had been entrusted with the charge of the standard. In the year 363 they were

ordered by Julian the Apostate to remove the cross which Constantine had set upon the imperial standard, and to replace it by some symbol of idolatry; this they refused to do. Count Julian had them punished. A scourge loaded with leaden balls was applied to their bodies, but they bore the punishment like men dead to pain. The cruelty of the judge did not stop here; but God stayed his hand and showed how He loves those who honor the cross. They were plunged into a caldron of boiling pitch; the pitch grew cold as they entered it, and left them unharmed. They were shut up for days in a dungeon, with nothing to eat except bread stamped with the symbol of an idol; when the prison doors were opened, the bread was untouched, and the saints were still strong and healthy, praising and thanking God. Julian ordered them beheaded. They received the sentence gladly and died as they had lived, faithful to the cross of Christ.

Children, the early Christians sanctified every action with the Sign of the life-giving Cross. Use it as they used it, remembering that you are the disciples of a crucified God.

God made the world and every one in it; He made them "good"; He loves all that He has made and always gives the help necessary to remain good; therefore, no matter how wicked or bad anyone may seem, there is always a possibility, with God's help (grace—we call it) that he may become good. If we look and pray for God's grace, there is always good ground for hope that things will turn out well, no matter how black they may sometimes look.

Grace, like a mighty river, flows from the cross of Christ Jesus, who died that He might bring to the soul of man this most sweet refreshment. The chan-

nels through which He conveys it to us are the sacraments and prayer.

The value and purpose of grace to the soul are the same as the gift of water to the earth. In the Sacrament of Penance it gives us life, as the rain restores dying vegetation; it revives and refreshes souls that are weak and gives drink to those who thirst for Christ, in Holy Communion. Every hour of the day or night, I may be refreshed by the water of grace, if I but desire and ask it, praying: "Grant me Thy grace, my merciful Jesus."

So important is God's grace to our soul, and so eager is our Father in heaven to give us this great gift, that He not only encloses the waters of grace in the sacraments and in prayer, but also in the sacramentals. These are minor or lesser channels of grace; they may be compared to small clouds, which give the earth less rain than the heavy ones. The sacramentals are available at all times. I dip my finger in holy water and sign myself with the Sign of the Cross, and God's grace falls on me like a spring shower. I devoutly kiss my blessed crucifix, and this sacramental rains grace upon my thirsty soul; I am refreshed and strengthened and go on my way, growing daily, as did the Child Jesus, in grace, before God and man.

During the Civil War, General Smith, of the Army of the South, was once returning to his command with some of his men, after the pass-word had been changed. Knowing that if he went forward ignorant of the new pass-word, he would be fired upon, he asked his men if any one would sacrifice his life to save the rest. A soldier stepped out of the ranks. After explaining the certain danger he would have to face, the General gave him a piece of paper, on which

were written these words: "Send me the pass-word, General Smith." He knew the soldier would be shot, then searched, and the paper found, read and the sign communicated to him. The soldier set out and reached the outposts.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"The word or sign."

But the soldier advanced without reply; at once rifles were raised and aimed at him. He thereupon made the Sign of the Cross, and, to his surprise, the rifles were lowered. The act of that Catholic soldier, in commending himself to God, was the very sign the Catholic commander had that morning given to the army.

My dear boys and girls, let us not be ashamed to confess our crucified Saviour, let us sign our brow with the holy cross; yea, in all our actions the cross should be used, whether we eat or drink, come in or go out, go to rest or rise. The Sign of the Cross is very venerable and holy, because it reminds us of the Most Holy Trinity and of our redemption. If you frequently and devoutly, with sorrow for your sins and with great faith, make the Sign of the Cross, you will feel its good effects; you will overcome all the enemies of your salvation.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Bread from Heaven

Louis, King of France, sat at his desk, dictating matters of great importance to his scribes, when a page announced that messengers had arrived in great haste, and urgently asked to be admitted to the royal presence. They were admitted and, bowing before his majesty, told him with great emotion that they had just now witnessed a great miracle at the cathedral; at the moment of the Elevation, all present had seen a beautiful Infant in the Sacred Host lifted up for adoration.

They urged the king to hasten to the church that he, too, might see the great miracle. Reverently the king listened and then, slowly shaking his head, said to the eager bystanders: "If I saw the divine Infant with my own eyes, as you tell me you have, I would not believe more firmly than I do now. No, better to believe without seeing, that we may deserve the blessing our Lord promised in reward for faith, when He said, 'Blessed are they who believe without seeing.'" So, to the disappointment of his courtiers, he did not stir, but calmly continued his task. This king was St. Louis, whose charity was as great as his faith. "Faith is to believe without seeing," and such faith our divine Lord expects of each of us, my dear children, in the sacrament of His love. Jesus waits for us in the tabernacle, waits for our adoration and our love, waits to come to us as our Guest in Holy Communion.

I wonder, my dear boys and girls, if you value this "Gift of God" on the Feast of Corpus Christi. During vacation you will perhaps have more time to visit our Lord in the tabernacle. He is your Friend, your best Friend, your unchangeable Friend; visit Him and tell Him all your needs, your desires, your wishes; adore Him, love Him.

The wheat in the distant fields is golden now; it will soon be ready for the harvest. The tall graceful stalks sway and bend in the breeze. Soon the reapers will come, mow it down, thrash out the grain, crush it in the mill and grind it into flour to nourish us and sustain life. As the wheat grew and developed it drew its sustenance from the earth. All nature helps to make the wheat in which Christ deigns to come to us in Holy Communion. And as the bread nourishes the body, even so does the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ nourish the soul. Without this food we should indeed languish and die.

Would you care to go without three meals a day? I am sure, if you did not have your breakfast every day, you would be very hungry. Your soul would be just as hungry if you did not feed it with this Bread from heaven. Perhaps you do not realize this hunger because you do not recognize or satisfy the wants of your soul as you do the wants of your body. Some children, I know, feed their souls in winter, but when summer comes they starve those poor souls because, perhaps, the church is farther away during vacation, or alas, they are too lazy to rise early. And yet souls must grow in summer as well as in winter, grow and develop day by day, therefore they cannot do without this "angelic bread from heaven."

A few days ago I heard a story which showed both

the love and faith of some soldiers in the terrible World War. It was on the eve of a great battle. The soldiers of the allied armies were preparing for the attack and had advanced to within a short distance from the enemy. The chaplain had promised to say Mass at dawn and give Holy Communion to the soldiers; indeed it was for many of them their last supper on this earth. The soldiers themselves had prepared the altar in a corner of a trench. Alas, the walls were of mud, from which ran slimy water! It was an ill-fitting place to receive the King of kings, in spite of all their efforts to make it a less unworthy shelter. Two of them went to the captain and begged permission to go and gather a few green bows to adorn the wall. Reluctantly the captain consented; for the danger was very great; the little tufts of green grew dangerously near the enemy's line; but the men would not be refused, and creeping on hands and knees, they picked the boughs and returned with torn hands and clothing, proudly bearing these ornaments to adorn the altar, as a sign of the loving welcome of the regiment to the Lord of heaven and earth, hidden in the Holy Eucharist.

Manna was the daily bread of the Israelites, and had in it, as the Psalmist tells us, the sweetness of every taste, that is, the flavor of every kind of food. So also does God wish the Blessed Eucharist to be our constant Food by frequent and worthy Communion; therein He gives us every precious grace that can strengthen or delight the heart of man.

St. Michael, a native of Spain, while yet a mere child, made a vow of chastity, and when his father, hearing of it, jestingly suggested marriage to him, he ran sobbing to our Lady's altar, and there more fer-

vently repeated his vow. At the age of six he ran away from home to lead the life of a hermit. His father brought him back and hired him out to a merchant, whom Michael served faithfully. He spent all his free time in church, in ecstasy before the Blessed Sacrament. When not yet twelve years old he again stole away secretly, and this time entered an order where, after due preparation, he was solemnly professed. The vow of chastity which he had made in childhood, and now renewed for life, was blessed by God. He was given special protection against temptations of the flesh and impure thoughts. Still he chastised his body. For years he deprived himself of bed and pillow, and literally had not "where to lay his head." The Blessed Sacrament was the aim of all his devotions. For It he strove to be mortified, fervent and chaste; and his love at times forced him to rush into the open air and act like a demented person. He spent his life in laboring in hospitals and prisons, out of love for our Lord.

Children, the saints made their whole lives a preparation for Holy Communion, and never felt themselves prepared. We give a short half hour and are perfectly content. Do, therefore, whatever you can, children, to serve our Lord, joyfully; not because it is customary or because you are commanded by your parents, but out of love, reverence and affection. Receive Him often in Holy Communion; He is always glad and happy to come to you.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Queen of Our Household

Our Lord's parable of the lost sheep, my dear children, is most beautiful, and at the same time most instructive. It presents the misery we experience when we wander away from God, and His great goodness in trying to bring us back to Him.

We are the sheep our dear Lord refers to; the ninety-nine are those who are in God's grace, while the one who has gone astray has lost God's grace. God created our bodies, which we can see; He also created our souls, which we cannot see or touch. At death the soul leaves the body; nobody sees it. The body is buried and decays. The soul lives forever; it is a spirit, without parts, and cannot be destroyed. God created man this way, and as Holy Scripture says, "in his own image and likeness," because we have this spiritual nature. On this account we are capable of knowing and loving God. And God is not only our first beginning but our last end. It is in Him that our true happiness consists, in knowing and loving Him. Jesus, through His Passion and death, has raised us to a high dignity, so that we may be able to see God face to face. This is the meaning of being of the flock of Jesus Christ. Every one in this flock, be he rich or poor, learned or ignorant, unknown or famous, may have everlasting union with God Himself.

A certain young man, after having stifled the voice of his conscience and lived a life of dissipation and sin for a long time, filled the measure of his iniquities one evening by going out in an open field and, in his madness, pointing his drawn dagger to heaven, challenging God to a duel. "Come down and show your power!" he mockingly cried. "See whether you are able to destroy me!"

And what happened? A piece of white paper came floating down and fell at the feet of the irreligious man. Picking it up he read *Miserere mei, Deus,* "Have mercy on me, O God," printed in letters of gold. Overwhelmed by the prodigy and the thought of God's mercy, the young man's heart was filled with the deepest sorrow and compunction. Ever afterwards he strove to lead a holy life, and he had the joy of dying a happy death.

God loves the soul of the sinner so much that He forgets, as it were, the good who are in no danger, leaving them in the desert, while He seeks here and there, by all means, to bring His stray sheep back to the fold. How does our Lord go after the sinner? Often by infusing a sense of discontent into his soul. In the midst of his pleasures he finds himself troubled. He finds that he is sadly cheated. Pleasures do not fill his soul; he feels that he was made for something better. He sees that he is a fool and a slave to some wretched passion, and he wishes, with all his heart, that he could be free once more. His conscience is alarmed; he becomes aware that he is resisting an interior voice. It is the voice of God within him. He is self-condemned and acknowledges that he has debased himself. This voice constantly cries out to him to amend his life, to turn about and live once more

for God and in obedience to God. Pleasure seems to have no charms for him; his soul is filled with the charm of being united once more to God. Jesus Christ has found him and is bringing a lost sheep back to the fold.

Children, during the World War we learned that we are living in a most wonderful age. Across the great ocean, over wire cables laid beneath the waves, messages of great importance were daily carried to the rulers on the other side. Back sped their reply to our shores, to be flashed on overhead wires, by the telegraph or telephone, to the President, as he sat at his desk in the White House, and his answer, which decided the destiny of our nation, perhaps, flashed back again. Thus man communicates with man, though they are thousands of miles apart, under the water, through the air, underground, overground. All this is very wonderful and we admire the cleverness and ability of man in using the power of electricity, which God created for his service.

And yet, wonderful as are these marvels of the world around us, did you ever stop to think, dear children, that each one of us carries around a telegraph and a telephone system more wonderful than the Western Union or the Bell system? In our bodies there are thousands of nerves, corresponding to wires, running from the center of the brain to every part of the body and, like them, carrying messages every moment. This system, which God has given you, is most perfect. The soul, which sits like a queen within your body, looks out through your eyes, hears with your ears, and reaches the world through the five windows of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. So, when your brain receives news from all the parts of your body, telling

what the eyes see and the ears hear, it is the soul that orders what is to be done. Like a wise general it telegraphs orders to the army of subjects, that it may lead them to victory, through obedience.

You may ask how the soul knows its course. King David, who lived thousands of years ago, answers you in the words of the Psalms, which are his songs and prayers, saying, "Thy law have I within my heart that I may not sin against thee." His law, made to guide our conduct, is in the heart of every one of us. Moreover, the soul has its advisers and counselors in the priests, as a general has his officers to advise him.

Once upon a time there was a little fellow who stood at the prisoners' bar, accused of stealing. He was so small that he had to stand on tiptoe to see the judge, who could hardly believe in the guilt of one so young. He questioned the boy, asking if he knew that it was wrong to steal.

Though the poor little culprit had had no good mother or wise father to teach him, he replied: "Yes, judge, I knew in my heart as how I oughtn't to have done it."

You see that the queen, his soul, had sent a strong telegram to the little fingers: "Thou shalt not steal," but these ten little subjects turned wicked traitors, refused to obey the queen and did their own will. This is disorder; this is sin. Alas, sometimes this noble and beautiful queen is overthrown by her wicked subjects, her garments rudely torn and stained. Yet she alone, our queenly soul, shall live forever, when all the rest of our being shall have died. For this reason when death draws near, the Church sends the priest to our bedside to restore the soul to her throne before she leaves the body; and because, as I told you, she

reaches out to the world through the five windows of our senses; it is through these that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction reaches the soul, and right royally restores her torn garments, heals her wounds and restores her to her throne. Then her subjects are forgiven by the mercy of the King, our God.

We also carry about us a wireless telegraph system to serve between heaven and us. If the boy had sent one prayer to heaven for aid, angels would have sped downward to control the rebellious subjects of the queen. His feet that ran would have lost their eagerness; the glitter of whatever his eyes and hands desired would have grown dim; his fingers would have been taught to fight for the queen.

Children, we all ought to know how to use this system. Let us often make use of it, that our queen may sit always enthroned, for she is the spouse of the most high God.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Our Pass to Heaven

All "for the greater glory of God," my dear children, must be the motive of all our actions. From the first moment when you awaken in the morning till the last prayer you say at night all must be done for the greater honor and glory of God.

In order that our daily actions may bear fruit for eternal life, it is necessary, above all, that they should be done with the intention of pleasing God. For this reason, as soon as we awake in the morning, we offer our heart and soul to Him, desiring that they may both be ever united to Him and employed in His divine service. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. I offer to Thee this day all my thoughts, words and actions," is the prayer we must say. This general offering extends to the whole day, unless, unhappily, we recall it by committing some deliberate sin, so that all we do during the day is directed to God, and done with a view of pleasing Him. "O my God, I do this for love of Thee." This short prayer renews our good intention of striving in all things to please God. Whether you study or play, children, or do little chores at home, do not forget to repeat this short prayer.

A hermit who had retired into the desert to do penance for his sins, was in the habit of going every day to a well at some distance to fetch water for his

use. The journey was tiresome, but he made it cheerfully, with the intention of pleasing God. One very hot day, as he was carrying his pail full of water under a broiling sun, the devil suggested to him that it was a very foolish thing to go daily such a distance for the water when he might, if he pleased, build his cell close to the spring. This thought took possession of his mind and he determined to place his cell closer to the spring.

While he was thinking of the change, he was surprised to hear a voice behind him saying, "One, two, three, four," as if there were someone walking after him and counting his steps. The hermit looked around in surprise and beheld a lovely youth, clad in a brilliant robe of light whom he recognized as an angel.

"Be not astonished," the stranger said, "I am your guardian angel and I am counting your steps, that not one may pass unrewarded."

With these words the beautiful vision disappeared. The hermit, giving thanks to God, went on his way with joyful steps, and resolved to increase rather than lessen the distance between his little hut and the well.

Any one who is in mortal sin cannot merit anything for heaven. As the branch cut off from the vine can bear no fruit, so Christians who have separated themselves from God by sin can yield no fruit for eternal life. He who is in the state of sin, though he may perform the most heroic actions, give all he has to the poor, and die a martyr, derives no benefit from all this; he can expect no reward hereafter. Should Christians in a state of sin daily offer up their labors and good works and often say: "Lord, all for Thy love," their pure intention will be of no benefit to them; all their works are lost for heaven. Children,

what an injury do Christians who live in sin for a long time inflict upon themselves.

St. Peter of Alcantara as a child was distinguished for his love of prayers and spirit of recollection. He rose very early, that he might have time to make his meditation. He then went to church, where he heard Mass with devotion, and often received Holy Communion. The rest of the day was spent at school, but even there, and also as he walked along the streets, he never forgot God, but continually raised his heart to Him by some little act of love. At dinner he would always leave a portion on his plate for the love of God, and would never drink anything but water.

Now it happened one day that, when the dinner hour came, Peter could not be found. They sought him high and low. At length the servants bethought themselves of one room which they had not searched—namely, the oratory. There they found the holy child upon his knees. He had forgotten all about his dinner. What a reproach is the example of this holy boy to those lazy children who, far from forgetting their meals through love of their prayers, often sit down to eat in the morning without having said any prayers at all.

A good intention makes all labor meritorious. The father who plies the axe, the trowel, the hammer, and offers up to God all his troubles and labors can gain heaven. When the farmer in the field bears the heat and the burden of the day, splits wood, works in the barn, and does this for God's sake he may promise himself an eternal reward. When mother, sweeping the room and doing the housework, has the glory of God in view, she can earn thereby an eternal reward. What I have said of your father and mother, children,

applies to you under the same conditions. There is indeed something great about a pure intention. It is said of Midas, the King of the Phrygians, that whatever he touched was changed into gold. If you possessed such a power, I have no doubt you would touch now a stone, now a piece of wood, in order to get gold. Now see, a pure intention makes all your works more precious than gold, for you cannot purchase heaven with gold, but you can with good works.

Those who have no pure intention in their work resemble spiders. The spider works till it has spent itself, but what does its work profit? It spins to catch only miserable flies, and to weave a web which can be destroyed by the weakest hand. The boy who does not offer his daily tasks to God, troubles himself much and long, and receives for it nothing but miserable earthly goods, which do not satisfy the heart, and disappear like smoke.

A pure intention is a very important matter; our eternal salvation depends on it, because all our actions are regulated by it. A pure intention makes all our works, labors and occupations meritorious for eternity. Thus will our days, though in the eyes of men they contain nothing great, be precious before God, being filled with good works done for His love and glory.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

An Unbridled Beast

My dear children, in to-day's Gospel Jesus teaches that those who are angry with their neighbors are as guilty of the judgment as those who, according to the doctrine of the Pharisees, actually commit murder. Anger is a mortal sin when we wish that a great evil, even death, may come to one of our companions or playmates, or when we desire to kill him or to do him some great injury, as soon as a chance offers itself. Christ has forbidden anger because murders often originate from it. When Cain did not control the anger which he had against his brother, Abel, he became a murderer. Never let sinful anger rise in your heart, bear no aversion to others; on the contrary be kind towards all and wish them well; it is our duty as Christians to love all, as brothers and sisters love one another.

A young man who was subject to anger, was often sick. The doctor who knew the cause of his illness, advised him to avoid the passion of anger, but in vain. He soon fell into a dreadful rage. The doctor, who happened to be present, held a looking-glass before his eyes. When he saw the deadly pallor of his face and his savage looking eyes, he trembled, and the doctor said: "Do you see yourself? Frequent storms like this uproot the tree of life." The young man corrected his ways and removed the cause of his illness.

Boys and girls, when you are tempted to anger take a looking-glass into your hands and look at yourself, and when you see that terrible beast you will soon become calm.

Anger is a burning fever; it makes you stupid, so that you do not know what you say or do. You see men get into a dreadful passion with an animal that will not do as they wish; with a stone against which they knock their foot; with a fire that does not burn quickly enough. Is this not unreasonable? And what foolish, senseless things they do when in a rage! The old heathen philosopher, Socrates, relates that when a boy he saw a man who wanted to open a door with a key but could not, bite the key, kick at the door with his feet, foam with rage and break out into dreadful oaths. At this sight Socrates conceived such a horror of anger that he never in his life gave way to it. Should you not detest and shun a vice which deprives man of reason, the noblest gift of heaven, and reduces him to the rank of a beast of the field?

St. John of God had occasion to reprimand a young nobleman for uttering improper words in the presence of several older persons. The excited young man said: "Go to the devil, and do not meddle with things you do not understand."

The saint replied: "Not understand? Amend your life and fear God, before whose revenge you are not secure for a moment."

More enraged, the young man gave him a blow in the face, but the saint, far from avenging himself, fell on his knees and only said: "I request you to strike as long as you please, only do not offend God by wicked talk."

The saint by his meekness won two souls for God

at once; the nobleman was so struck with amazement that he became his greatest friend, and a noble lady, who happened to be present, his most fervent disciple. So much does meekness effect; it breaks the anger of the fiercest man and softens the hardest hearts, so that they acknowledge their wrong and amend their lives.

In order to preserve yourselves from the fatal consequences of the sin of anger, you must fight against it while you are still young, my dear children. Like every other bad passion, it grows stronger and stronger the older you get and the more you indulge it; while on the contrary, if you strive against it, it grows weaker and weaker, and gives you less trouble each succeeding day. One of the wise men of Greece advised the Emperor Augustus, whenever he felt angry, to recite the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet before saying or doing anything. A very prominent man once broke out into most offensive language against St. Francis de Sales: the saint looked at him quietly, and answered not a word. The angry man considered this moderation as a sign of contempt, and redoubled his rage; but the saint again kept silence. At length the man departed. Another man who witnessed the insult asked the saint how he managed to control himself so well. He replied: "I and my tongue have made an agreement that whenever I am excited, my tongue must be quiet and that I must not speak until the inward fever is cooled down." Take an example from this saint, and treasure up the lessons he gives you. If anger rises in your heart close your mouth and do not say a word.

A little boy, a companion of the Blessed Sebastian, once having had a quarrel with another child, entertained for some time his feeling of anger. When

Sebastian heard of this, he resolved to be the means of making peace between his little comrades. Going to his friend, he inquired if he had said the "Our Father" that morning.

The boy, not knowing the reason of Sebastian's question, replied: "Why, yes; of course I did."

Sebastian responded: "Then surely you did not notice the words, 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.'"

Realizing his fault, the boy at once begged pardon of God and sought the child with whom he had quarreled, to ask his pardon.

Children, how are you to fight the passion of anger? In the first place, ask God to help you, when you say your daily prayers, hear Mass, or frequent the sacraments. Try to speak gently and kindly to him who has injured you, or do not speak at all until your anger has passed. Finally, look at our dear Lord on the crucifix, the One who bore with infinite patience the greatest injuries. Every day try to repeat many times this beautiful prayer: "O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine."

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Unruly Appetites

From to-day's Gospel, my dear children, we can learn a lesson that is very useful, especially for the young folks who always want to satisfy their appetites. An inordinate desire for food or drink is called intemperance; it is a great sin. There are many people who never stop eating. They are just like a mill, continually on the grind. What a sad thing for a Christian to be so afflicted, when Christ and the saints mortified their desire for food at all times.

The glutton or the drunkard is like a beast of the field, a slave to his own appetites. He has lost his reason and has no regard for the law of God. He shuts his heart against God's help, divine grace. The terrible results of intemperance we have daily before our eyes. Consider the homes made desolate, wives and children starving and naked, the most horrible crimes which are committed, and the sinners who are brought to an early grave. Truly, our whole land is ruined by the awful vice of intemperance. Ah, my dear children, pray earnestly to God that you may never be so unhappy as to become victims of this vice and, in order that you may be preserved from the danger of it, practice throughout life continual temperance, or moderation in your eating and drinking. Deny yourselves now in little things, and you will acquire that command over yourselves, which, with God's grace, will enable you to stand firm in after-life against greater temptations.

St. Monica, the mother of the great St. Augustine,

was brought up under the care of a virtuous nurse, who endeavored to train her in habits of self-denial as well as other virtues. Thus, among other excellent practices, she would never allow the little Monica to drink between meals, saying to her, "Now you only want a drink of water; but when you grow up and are mistress of the cellar, you will not care for water, though the habit of drinking will still remain." The very danger which the prudent servant had foreseen actually befell her, for as she grew older her parents frequently entrusted her with the key of the cellar, and sent her to draw the wine for the use of the family. When so doing she would sometimes take a little sip out of curiosity, but by degrees the quantity increased, and at length she acquired such a liking for the wine that she would drink whole cupfuls with the greatest relish. Thus did she sow the seeds of intemperance, and expose herself to the danger of grievous excess. Almighty God saw her peril, and mercifully rescued her from the brink of the precipice in the following manner:

It happened one day that the young Monica had some angry words with one of the servants. Now this was the very maid who had been in the habit of accompanying her young mistress to the cellar, and who had frequently noticed her fondness for the winecup. In her vexation she now reproached Monica with her failing, calling her a young winebibber. This reprimand made the deepest impression upon young Monica, who, entering into herself, sincerely deplored her fault, and from that moment entirely corrected it. Thus did her humility, in profiting by the rebuke of her servant, lay the foundation of her future sanctity.

Intemperance is the source of many sins. The first is the neglect of religious duties. Private and family devo-

tions are omitted; Mass on Sundays and holydays is neglected; likewise the Word of God is brushed aside; sermons are ridiculed and never attended. The intemperate never want to go to confession and thereby omit their Easter duty from year to year.

One morning Johnny went to town with his father, and stayed in his office until it was time for lunch. Johnny had never remained downtown so long, and he was very much interested in all the books and papers in his father's office. He and his father were chums, and when lunch time came they went off together to eat in a nearby restaurant.

The waiter knew the boy's father and when he received the order for lunch asked the boy what he would like to have to drink. The waiter did not ask the father, because he knew that it was the father's custom to have a bottle of wine each day. The boy replied: "I'll take what father takes." Then his father knew that something must be done; it would never do for the waiter to bring a bottle of wine to the boy. He quietly called the waiter to his side and changed his order to a glass of milk. When the lunch was brought in, two glasses of milk were set down on the table, one for the boy and one for his father. The little lad was greatly pleased that both of them should be having the same lunch; but all that afternoon, after the father had gone back to his office, Johnny's words kept ringing in his ears: "I'll take what father takes."

He went home in the evening, and was happy a little while in hearing Johnny tell his mother all about his day's fun in the city and how he had the same things for lunch as his father. That night, after the boy had gone to bed, the father still heard those same words over and over again, and he remembered his wine, cigars and

all his bad habits. At last he could endure it no longer; kneeling down, he asked God to guide him, and from that night on he never tasted wine again. I think that the boys and girls who can do just what their parents do and are sure that they are doing what is right and true and good and kind, ought to be happy boys and girls.

Intemperance brings about quarrels and murder. It often happens that drunken men quarrel, abuse one another, and come to blows, which frequently result in murder.

Children, we should sometimes voluntarily deprive ourselves of a certain amount of food and drink in order to gain control of our appetites. I am going to tell you about an American saint who restrained herself from an inordinate desire for food. St. Rose of Lima, at the age of six, began to fast three times a week on bread and water. At fifteen she made a vow never to eat meat unless compelled to do so by those who had authority over her and whom, she thought, she could not disobey without sinning. Her mother obliged her to sit at the table with the rest of the family and fare as the others did. But St. Rose would beg the servant to offer her only a dish composed of a crust of coarse bread and a handful of bitter herbs. Thus she voluntarily mortified herself at the same table where others sought to gratify their appetites generously. She was accustomed to gather wild herbs in the forest and to cultivate them carefully in her own garden so that she might have the material for self-denial always at hand. Her fast in general was so strict that in twenty-four hours she had nothing but a piece of bread and a little water.

My dear boys and girls, pray every day to Saint Rose: "Dear Saint Rose, teach me how to do something pleasing to God every moment of my life, as long as I live."

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

In the Garb of Sheep

A good man, my dear children, has good thoughts; he takes pleasure in that which is good, hates and detests that which is evil, is occupied inwardly with God and divine things, humbles himself before God and thanks Him for graces and benefits. He recommends himself to His protection, repents of his faults, and when a bad thought or a sinful desire arises in his heart, fights against it. He also loves and esteems his fellow men. A good man guards against all sins of the tongue, against all vulgar and impure expressions, against slander, detraction, cursing and swearing. What he says is necessary and useful, for the honor of God and the good of men. A good man guards against every false step, practices the Christian virtues, and conscientiously fulfils the duties of his religion and state of life.

Bad companions come to us in sheep's clothing. If they showed themselves in their true form; that is, if they revealed their unbelief, their bad desires, passions and malice, and said what they really desire, they would gain no friends, everybody would avoid them with contempt. Knowing this, they disguise themselves and seek to appear as if they were very honest and pious, having the interest of all men at heart.

They seem to be very harmless, but are full of cunning. Whenever possible they either totally set aside the Commandments of God and the Church, or they explain away everything that checks sensuality. They would

weaken zeal for virtue, calling it exaggeration. They tell us that mortification and self-denial are injurious to health and embitter the joys of life. They pretend to give us honey; instead they give us poison. We must beware of bad companions, that they may not ensnare us.

Satan tempted Eve and told her that eating of the forbidden fruit would bring no evil consequences; on the contrary, it would be of the greatest advantage to her, and would make Adam and herself equal to God. Thus he also comes to us, in the form of an angel of light or as a companion, in order to win our confidence. He makes us believe that this or that sin does not signify very much, that we can go to confession again, that God is infinitely merciful, and always ready to forgive, that there is still time to do penance, that even the thief on the cross obtained pardon. Oh, how often does this crafty enemy succeed in leading men astray and plunging them into hell.

My dear boys and girls, if you value your eternal salvation, listen to this story; for what happened to a certain young man might also happen to you.

In a French town lived, some years ago, a young man who was an example and a model of piety to every one. One day there was a great public demonstration in the town. The young man was as anxious as the rest of the young people to see the festivities and take part in the rejoicing. On ordinary occasions he was accompanied by a companion of his own age, as pious and as innocent as himself, but on this day the latter remained at home, probably fearing that he might be led into an occasion of sin. So the young man went alone.

On his way he met another young man who was noted for his wickedness and who was just the opposite in character to the pious boy. His duty was to avoid his

new comrade, lest he be led into temptation by him, but this he neglected to do. At first their conversation was about matters of little importance, but soon his new companion began to use improper language, and speak with contempt of religious things. The young man neglected to pray to God for help and turn away from the path of evil. Continuing the new friendship, he lost the grace of God in a short time.

Not long afterwards the pious boy of former days felt his heart filled with remorse. He had rejected his God, and now God rejected him. By a sudden death he was called to the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, was judged and perhaps condemned. The young man who had been the occasion of his fall was so overcome by the sudden death that he at once went to the neighboring monastery, and, casting himself at the feet of the abbot, asked him most kindly to receive him, that he might do penance for his great sin.

"O my Father," he said, "I pray you to have pity on me who have just been the cause of casting into hell a soul created by God for heaven. Permit me to do penance under your guidance for the rest of my life." He became a fervent religious, but could never smile; and in his humility and sorrow he would cast himself on the ground before the religious as they entered the church.

Evil example is as catching as fever or smallpox. A sin committed in the presence of others, especially of children and young people, is very often the occasion of their falling into a like offence whenever they are tempted. Our sin may be the cause of the ruin of many souls. When we go to confession we ought to mention, as nearly as we can, the number of those to whom we have given a bad example.

St. Benedict, when a boy, was sent to Rome, and there placed in the public schools. Being frightened by the sinful lives of the Roman youths, he fled to the desert mountains of Subiaco, and was directed by the Holy Ghost into a deep cave. He lived there for three years, unknown to any save a holy monk, Romanus, who clothed him in a monastic habit and brought him food. The fame of his sanctity soon gathered disciples round him, while many parents confided their children to his care. Amongst those trained by him were St. Maurus, then twelve years old, and St. Placidus, also a child. By prayer he did all things; he wrought miracles and prophesied; mended a broken sieve, brought water from a rock, filled an empty barrel with oil, gave alms and cast out devils.

A peasant whose son had just died, ran in anguish to St. Benedict, crying out: "Give me back my son."

The monks joined the poor man in his petitions; but St. Benedict replied: "Such miracles are not for us to work, but for the blessed Apostles. Why will you lay upon me a burden which my weakness cannot bear?"

Moved at length by compassion he knelt down, and prostrating himself on the body of the child prayed earnestly. Then rising he cried out: "Behold not, O Lord, my sins, but the faith of this man, who desireth the life of his son; and restore to the body that soul which Thou hast taken away."

Hardly had he spoken when the child's body began to tremble, and taking him by the hand he restored him alive to his father.

My dear boys, pray earnestly to the great St. Benedict, that he may be your guide and steer you clear of all evil companions.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

To Give an Account

Again and again, my dear boys and girls, you have been told that one of God's greatest gifts to His children was the mind, by which they may know Him. We owe Him the service of that mind, therefore, as well as our hearts and souls. To make that mind's service what it should be, the mind must be cultivated, just as a garden is cultivated to make it produce nourishing food. This is what the schools do for us; they cultivate the mind and make it produce something that is pleasing to God and beneficial to man. They teach us how to be good Christians and good citizens; for we must not separate service of country from service of God. The man who is the best Catholic will be the best citizen. Remember that, children; but remember, too, that to be a good Catholic means to use everything God has given you to the very best of your ability.

As Catholics you are better educated in the truths of God than other children; you should know better than they what is right and just, whether you are at work or at play. When you grow older you should also know your duty in time of peace or war better than others.

Therefore, Catholic boys and girls who do not take the trouble to study and fit themselves to help determine the laws of their country are "slackers"; they fail in their duty to both God and country.

St. Veronica's parents were peasants of a village near Milan. From her childhood she cheerfully toiled hard

at home and in the field. Gradually the desire for perfection grew within her; she became deaf to the jokes and songs of her companions, and sometimes, when reaping or hoeing, would hide her face and weep. She soon began to be anxious about her learning, and rose secretly at night to teach herself to read. She joined a community which was extremely poor. Her duty was to beg through the city for their daily bread. She sought, to the last days of her life, the hardest and most humbling occupations. When Veronica was urged in sickness to accept some exemption from her labors, her one answer was, "I must work while I can, while I have time." Dare we, then, waste our time?

Whether we know it or not, every minute of the day we are answering three questions: *What* shall I do? *how* shall I do it? *why* shall I do it? If we answer them without thinking at all we are not much better than animals that follow a blind instinct; if we answer them consciously, after thought, we use the highest powers God has given us—reason and free will. It follows, therefore, that the more thought we give to these three questions the better men and women we shall be.

Now we cannot always answer the first question just as we wish; we cannot always choose *what* we shall do. We are all given certain things to do. Circumstances may control, more or less, what we have to do, especially when we are young. For instance, we must go to school, we must help at home or, perhaps, go out and earn something to help maintain the home. Of course where we have a choice it is very important to make it well, to do what will be of the greatest value. Because we cannot always choose what we shall do, it is the least important of the three questions.

What we do immediately gains or loses in value ac-

cording to *how* we do it. Your parents can send you to school for years and years, but they cannot make you learn; that depends upon you and how you study. How do you do your home duties? how do you do your work? The answer to these questions tells whether you are "dumb driven animals," or "heroes in the strife"; or intelligent human beings using the gift of free will. Children, make this your motto: "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well," for that is how we should do all things.

Still more important is the answer we give to the third question: *why?* This intention, as we call it, gives things a high spiritual value. By it we can lift the meanest thing out of the dust and make it shine with the glory of heaven, or, alas! we can drag down the high things, and ourselves with them, into the very depths of hell. If we can truthfully say that we do things for God's honor and glory, that we devote our powers of body, mind and soul to the purpose for which God gave them, then, indeed, we turn everything into gold. As an old English poet says: "A servant with this clause makes drudgery divine; who sweeps a room as for God's laws, makes that and the action fine."

Children, do not deceive yourselves into thinking that your motive is good when you are careless as to how your work is done. Even the things best in themselves (saying our prayers, going to Mass and receiving the sacraments), may become occasions of sin if you do not consider *how* and *why* you should do them. Doing a thing for a good intention, however, does not mean that you must always be asking: "why are we doing this?" That would be impossible. If we set out each day with a good purpose, knowing why we are engaged in the business of life, we shall not stray far out of our course.

If we do, it will be easy to get back by occasionally considering the question: "why are we doing this?"

There is one who has been the model for all the saints and who is our model every day we have to serve God. Children, you can easily guess who I mean; it is the blessed Mother of God. What she did in her life was very much like what other people do. (Of course she had a special vocation as the Mother of God, but otherwise she did what others do.) She lived at home with her parents, kept house for our Lord and St. Joseph, did the work that many girls and women think too hard, tiresome and stupid for them to do. It was not so much *what* she did that made her the greatest of women; it was *how* and *why* she did it. She left her parents and went to the temple as a little girl because they told her to, she studied so well that the beautiful words of the Scripture became her own and were mingled in her prayers with the simple words from her own heart. She absorbed from the Scripture the spirit of reverence and obedience; when God sent His angel to her with a direct message, she was ready to answer: "Be it done unto me according to thy word." If her heart had not been open to God's grace; she would not have been "full of grace" and "blessed amongst women." She is always ready to help us, children.

The Blessed Virgin showed St. Veronica three mystical letters. The first signified purity of intention—to begin her daily duties for no human motive, but for God alone. The second, an aversion to murmuring and criticism—by attending to her own affairs, never judging her neighbor, but praying for those that have erred. The third was daily meditation on the Passion of our Lord—to forget her own pains and sorrows in those of her Lord, and to weep silently over the memory of His wrongs.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Neglect of God's Inspirations

Jerusalem, my dear children, is a figure of your soul. and in Jesus weeping over the destruction of this city we can see His great concern for the salvation of our immortal souls.

Our good Lord loved the city of Jerusalem. It was a magnificent city, situated on a lofty plain, like an immense fortress, defended on all sides by the steepness of the approach, with splendid Temple, palaces and gardens, surrounded by a rich and beautiful country. No city in the world could compare with it. It was the figure of the eternal city of God in heaven. What is the glory and splendor of the material city of Jerusalem, compared with that of an immortal soul? An earthquake could destroy the city, whilst a cyclone would demolish every building. The soul is immortal, and gifted with the power of seeing God as He is and sharing with Him His wisdom and glory.

Jesus Christ preached in the streets of Jerusalem, He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, made the lame walk, and performed many other miracles. He showed that He was the true prophet sent by God. He announced a sweet and pure doctrine—of love of God, peace and good will among men. It was their time of visitation, but they turned a deaf ear to Him; they shut their eyes so as not to see; they hardened their hearts so as not to feel, and drew down upon themselves their

own destruction. This is the very thing which is often done nowadays. Many souls now disregard the time of visitation. Born of Catholic parents, baptized, instructed in the truths of religion, having received first Communion, these souls have thrown away these graces. They are making money and thereby driving God and His Commandments out of mind.

A young man of royal blood, named Guthlake, led by a wild and adventurous disposition, at the age of fifteen joined a robber band, and became famous through the kingdom of Mercia for his daring deeds. One night, after nine years of this life, as he lay awake in the forest, the thought of death, the vanity of earthly pleasures and the joys of heaven stirred his heart; whereupon, waking his companions, he bade them choose another chief, as he had vowed to serve Christ. Tearing himself from their entreaties and embraces, he exchanged his arms for the dress of a rude peasant, and humbly begged admittance into the Abbey of Repton. There he did penance for two years; when, moved by the example of the desert saints, he withdrew to the marshes of Lincolnshire, to lead a hermit's life. In this solitude he suffered the most terrible assaults from the evil spirit. The latter cast him into foul swamps, reproached him continuously with the sins of his youth, and once seemed to have brought him to the mouth of hell itself. But Guthlake was spiritually stronger now, in his weakness, than he had been physically in the most brilliant days of his youth. He prayed constantly, and when nearly exhausted by his trials, drove the devils off with the name of Jesus.

It was a dreary and fearful waste to which God called Guthlake, but it became a holy and refreshing sanctuary before he died. Morning and night an angel visited

him, and whispered the secrets of heaven to him as he knelt in prayer. The birds and fishes came at his call and ate out of his hand, while the swallows would perch on his head and knees and let him help them to build their nests.

The hermit Guthlake died a holy and saintly death, and over his grave rose the famous Abbey of Croyland.

Children, every good thought is the whisper of grace in our hearts. Listen instantly, obey, lest you grieve and extinguish the Holy Spirit of God.

Take care! The time of your visitation is slipping by and will be gone before you know it. Almighty God may do what He pleases. He may send sickness upon you for a little while and you will not heed His call. Those who turn a deaf ear to all that God says to them, run the greatest risk, let the time of their visitation go by and thereby fall into eternal ruin. The time of visitation is now; for who can promise you there will be a to-morrow? Death is picking off his victims every day and hour, when he is least expected. He is like a rifleman aiming at us from behind a breastwork; we do not see him, but perhaps we hear the sharp report and find ourselves with a mortal wound. We must die and there is no help for it.

At Syracuse, in Italy, reigned a tyrant named Dionysius. He was feared and hated by everyone as an oppressor, but he himself, lashed by the fury of a bad conscience, also lived in constant fear. On hearing one of his slaves lauding him and wishing to be in his place, if only for one week, Dionysius summoned him to his presence. He clothed him with magnificent garments, surrounded him with many servants, and bade him be seated at a table laden with delicious food. All was hilarity and good humor. Suddenly the happy slave

raised his eyes to the ceiling. He became pale with fright, fled from the table, and refused all the good things before him. He beheld above his head a sword suspended by a silk thread; at any moment the thread might break and destroy his life.

Children, this is a picture for you, especially for bad boys and girls. You too are seated at the banquet of joy and pleasure, but above your head hangs the sword of divine justice on the frail thread of life. At any moment the thread may break, and the eternal Judge may say to the angel of death: "Take your scythe and cut." You know not, children, whether you will see the morrow.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Cornerstone of All Virtues

God finds His greatest pleasure in humility. It is to the humble that He gives His graces; it is the humble that He exalts and rewards. It was humility that elevated Joseph in Egypt; it was humility that elevated David to the throne of Israel; it was humility that crowned all the virtues of St. John the Baptist and made him so great a favorite of heaven; it was humility that exalted the Blessed Virgin to the dignity of being Mother of God.

The Apostle exhorts us to practice humility in order that God may exalt us at the time of visitation. God often exalts His oppressed servants and delivers them from their sufferings, even in this life. The Israelites lived many years in the greatest slavery in Egypt. God freed them from the hand of their oppressors and gave them the rich land of Canaan for their inheritance. David was persecuted by Saul and his life was in danger, yet God did not abandon him, but made him king of Israel. Job was blessed with riches and children.

If God does not exalt the humble in this life, He will certainly do it hereafter. Lazarus lay at the door of Dives, poor, sick and full of misery, but his illness lasted only a few years. What became of him afterwards? Angels carried him into Abraham's bosom. He humbled himself during life under the mighty hand of God. Look at Jesus. The Apostle says of Him: "He humbled him-

self, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." Should we not feel encouraged to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God?

Saint Dionysius the Great was born of heathen parents, but became a convert to the true faith. For seventeen years he was Bishop of Alexandria, a diocese which then ranked next to that of Rome, and he ruled it well. He came forth victorious from trials which were many and lifelong, in the strength of his humility. He was assailed during the heathen persecution, which drove him into banishment again and again. He has told us the story of his heroic sufferings and apostolic zeal in the midst of this fiery trial, only because the slander of an envious Christian forced him to the "folly," as he called it, of justifying himself. Even then he detracts from his own renown, by dwelling on the merits of others. In the same spirit of meekness and humility he restored peace to the Church when it was disturbed by internal disputes; he won sinners to penance and brought erring Christians to the truth.

God will do nothing for us until we are humble. Whenever we feel tempted to take pride or pleasure in ourselves, let us reflect that this desire comes from the devil who would draw us away from God, back to our own nothingness and sin.

All the exercises of good works and virtue are valueless before God without humility. This is strikingly shown in the following legend. A certain saint had a vision. He was translated before the judgment-seat of God and saw how souls who had departed this life,

arrived to be judged every moment. Each had a sack over his shoulder; in front were his good works, and in the part hanging over his back were his sins. Both the good works and the sins, after their kind, were put up in packages. The sack was opened, and the packages, with their good works and sins, were laid upon the scales. The packages of the sins of most people by far outweighed the good works, whereupon the divine Judge pronounced the sentence of condemnation. Finally a woman came with a sack, the front part of which was full of good works, while the other part contained only a few faults. The saint thought: "Thanks be to God; this woman will certainly go to heaven," but when the good works were put on the scales they were as light as a feather and were overbalanced by the sins. Full of astonishment the saint said to an angel who was standing by: "How comes it that this multitude of good works has so light a weight?" The angel replied: "This woman did a great deal of good, but she was full of vanity and pride; her good works are without weight in the eyes of God, and she is lost forever."

Children, every one who is not humble of heart will share the fate of that woman; all the exercises of virtue and good works without humility are valueless before God. St. Gregory says: "He who gathers virtues without humility, throws sand against the wind." Learn from this again how necessary humility is, since without it all other virtues and good works are fruitless. It is only when we sincerely humble ourselves before God that He is pleased with us and gives us His graces.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Place a Guard upon My Mouth

"I wish," said St. Francis de Sales, "I had buttons on both lips which I should be obliged to unfasten when I had occasion to speak, for I should have more time to reflect, and consider my speech." This great bishop of the Church of God was so mortified that he did not need any buttons on his lips. Children, we need buttons for our lips, in order that we may "speak right." We commit sins with other senses and members of the body in general; but most sins are committed with the tongue. On the day of judgment we shall see how great is the number of people who on account of the sins of the tongue will be cast into hell.

Saint Pambo, the hermit, chose from his youth the austere life of a solitary in the desert. Full of the fear of God, he was never seen to smile or to lose his recollection. He never spoke without prayer, and when consulted upon any spiritual matter, humbly replied that he did not know what to say, and then took time to pray and reflect. He sometimes waited three months before giving an answer, until God taught him what to say. The brethren in consequence received his words as if they came from God. When a monk asked if it was not good to praise others, he answered: "It is still better to be silent." For three years Pambo prayed that God would not glorify him on earth; but his prayer was not heard, for his face often appeared so majestic and brilliant as

to dazzle those who looked upon it. With other solitaries Pambo was banished by the Arians, a heretical sect, to a pagan island, where they converted all the inhabitants. At his death he said he had always lived by his own labor and had never said a word he repented of.

Pambo left the world so young he had not learned to read. He asked a fellow monk to teach him some psalms by heart. His first lesson was the words: "I said: I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." He was so struck by this that he said it was enough, and he would come back for another lesson when he knew it. He did not return, and six months afterwards the solitary met him and asked him why he did not come. He said he had not yet learned his first lesson. In after-life, he told a friend it had taken him nineteen years to master it.

Children, we may often think the penances of the saints are beyond our strength; let us, then, imitate the guard they kept over the tongue. This is within the reach of all. Saint Pambo says: "It is good to fast and to give alms of the work of thy hands, but this will not make thee a monk. If thou art careful never to offend against charity thou shalt save thy soul."

Children, talebearing is an abominable vice in the eyes of God; therefore the Sacred Scriptures say: "Six things there are which the Lord hateth and the seventh his soul detesteth: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth evil plots, feet that are swift to run into mischief, a deceitful witness that uttereth lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren." Boys and girls, guard against this vice and faithfully keep secrets entrusted to you.

One day an English nobleman came to see Josiah Wedgwood, the famous potter. A potter is a man who makes

beautiful things from clay. One of the employees, a lad of fifteen years, was delegated to show the nobleman around the factory. The nobleman was a person who did not believe in God, and who, while he was intelligent, was very rough in his speech, used improper language, and made light of sacred things. The boy was at first greatly shocked at the wicked man's words, but after a while laughed at the "smart" remarks. Mr. Wedgwood, who followed them, heard much of the conversation and was very indignant at the way in which the visitor spoke in the boy's presence. When they came back to the office, Mr. Wedgwood picked up a very beautiful vase of the choicest pattern and, holding it in his hands, told the nobleman of the long and careful way in which it had been prepared. The gentleman was greatly pleased with the explanation, and was much charmed with the beautiful shape and color. He reached out to take it. Just as he touched it, however, the owner let it fall to the ground, and his visitor grew angry and said: "I wanted that one for myself."

"My lord," said the old potter sternly, "there are things more precious than any vase—things, which, when ruined, can never be restored. I can make another vase like this for you, but you can never give back to the boy, who has just left us, the simple faith and the pure heart which you have destroyed by making light of sacred things and by using impure words in his presence."

Children, be prudent in speech and always reflect, before you speak, whether what you are going to say is right and according to the will of God.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Love of Our Enemies

My dear children, by placing before us a Samaritan who treated the poor wounded Jew charitably, and saying: "Go and do thou in like manner," Jesus teaches us in to-day's Gospel that we also must love our enemies. The Jews avoided all intercourse with the Samaritans and refused them every act of charity. The Samaritans, in their turn, refused them their love and returned evil for evil. From the parable of the unmerciful servant we learn that those who refuse to be reconciled with their neighbors must expect a severe judgment and eternal damnation.

Our dear Lord Jesus teaches us to love our enemies, giving us a most splendid example, even in His childhood. Herod seeks His life, and Jesus goes out of his way; the cruel king murders all the children of Bethlehem and its vicinity. Jesus does not punish the murderer. In His public life He is surrounded on all sides by enemies who envy, hate and persecute Him. They call His miracles works of the devil, they misrepresent His doctrine, and say that He seduces the people; they pursue Him and strive to take His life. How does He conduct Himself towards them? Does He return evil for evil? No; He suffers and forgives.

He teaches us how to love our enemies, in His Passion and death. He is bound as a malefactor deserving death; He is scourged; the soldiers put a crown of thorns on

His head and spit in His face; He is crucified between two thieves and is mocked even in His agony. He silently endures it all and prays for His enemies. When we see the example of Jesus, can we still entertain hatred toward our neighbors? Can we refuse to forgive from our heart those who offend us?

John Gaulbert was a soldier who lived during the revolutionary time in Florence. He got into trouble with a near relative and they became deadly enemies. One Good Friday, as he was riding into Florence escorted by armed men, he met his enemy in a place where neither could avoid the other. John would have slain him; but his adversary, who was unarmed and unprepared to fight, fell upon his knees with his arms outstretched in the form of a cross, and implored him, for the sake of our Lord's holy Passion, to spare his life. Grace triumphed, and John not only held his hand from blood, but cast out from his heart the wicked spirit of revenge. A humble and changed man, he entered the Church of St. Miniato, which was near; and whilst he prayed, the figure of our Lord on the cross before which he was kneeling bowed its head toward him, as if to ratify his pardon. Abandoning the world, he gave himself up to prayer and penance in the Benedictine Order. After a life of great austerity, he died a saintly death. History tells us that angels sang around his bed just as he expired. The heroic act which merited his conversion for St. John Gaulbert was the forgiveness of his enemy. Let us imitate him in this virtue, resolving never to revenge ourselves in deed, in word, or thought.

To bear wrongs patiently and to forgive injuries, are part of the duty of every Christian. Indeed it is the very spirit of the Christian religion to suffer patiently the injuries we receive from others, and to forgive our

enemies from our hearts. "I say to you," said our Lord, "not to resist evil, but if a man strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." My dear boys and girls, by bearing patiently the evil which others do us, we prevent further sin on their part, inasmuch as we soothe their angry feelings. Often our very meekness will bring them to repentance; whereas if we fly into a passion and reproach them, we increase their anger and are the cause of their offending God still more. "A mild word breaketh wrath," says a wise man, "but a hard word stirreth up fury."

A servant who was attached to the court of the Emperor of China became afflicted with a loathsome disease, and was driven from the palace. Having no friends he was at the point of death from exposure and want. Two poor Christian widows took compassion on him and received him into their cottage, dressed his sores, and waited on him with the greatest tenderness. At the end of three months they ventured to speak to him on the affairs of his soul. To their grief and astonishment he flew into a passion, loaded them with reproaches, and threatened to denounce them to the persecutors. In fact he left the house and did not return for some time, leaving them for a whole month in fear and trembling. At the end of that time he again had recourse to them for assistance. Forgetting the ingratitude and the ill-treatment which they received from him, they welcomed him with the same charity, and waited on him with the same care, redoubling in the meanwhile their prayers for his conversion; whereupon the heart of the pagan was softened. "A religion," said he, "which inspires such conduct cannot but come from God. Teach me to know and love the God whom you serve, and to prepare for death which cannot be far distant." The widows instructed

him and had him baptized. Not long after he expired, glorifying God and blessing his charitable benefactresses.

The great war brought to light some very striking examples of heroic charity. We learned from the daily papers that the Germans hated the English, the English the Turks, the Turks the Italians, the Italians the Austrians, and the Austrians the Russians. Everybody hated somebody else, and so we had this dreadful war; for war teaches men to hate their enemies. Jesus taught us to love our enemies. He is always telling us to do something that is hard. Jesus loved Judas. He prayed for the men who crucified Him. If people would only love their enemies, there would be no more war.

One of the New York newspapers told the story of an Englishman and a German, who had both been severely wounded in one of the battles in Northern France. They lay very near together in a trench. One of them had some water in his canteen, and the other had none. He who had the water crawled over and shared it with the suffering enemy. Then they began to love each other, and when they loved each other they could not be enemies any longer.

Children, forgive one another, that God may forgive you your sins, and receive you as His children into the mansions of everlasting peace.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Return of the Prodigal

Sin is the leprosy of the soul, my dear children. It deprives the soul of the life of grace, and plunges it into eternal death. If your soul is stained by sin you must try and cure it by going to confession, just as you would go to the doctor for your body when you were in pain. Our dear Lord has also provided you with a doctor to cure your soul, and he is the priest. He applies the remedy by the Sacrament of Penance, which cures your soul. The priest who is the anointed of the Lord has the power to restore life to your immortal soul.

You must receive the Sacrament of Penance often, because you frequently sin. Even the greatest saints sinned. Although they had no mortal sin on their consciences they went to confession daily and every week. Jesus Christ made it a rule that everybody should confess their sins.

In the early ages of Christianity St. Afra lived in the town of Augsburg, where her life gave public scandal. Moved by God's grace she was converted, becoming a great model of contrition and confidence in God's mercy —marks of a true conversion. She was arrested by persecutors of the Christians and ordered to sacrifice to the heathen gods. She answered humbly that her past sins had been great and that, though unworthy to die for Christ, to whom she confessed her sins daily, she

desired to do so, in order to wash her sins in blood. In vain did the judge mock her for being a Christian. She told him that Christ came to save sinners, consoling herself by thoughts of St. Mary Magdalen, the penitent thief and other examples of Christ's mercy.

After her examination she was taken to an island in the river Lech and burned alive. To the last she persevered in prayer and penance. Her tears fell as the flames rose around her, and the Christians heard her praying aloud: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou camest to call sinners to penance; receive in this hour the penance of my sufferings, and save me by this fire from fire eternal. Thou alone wast offered on the cross a victim for all. To Thee I offer myself in sacrifice. Receive me as a victim for Thy name." The night of Afra's martyrdom, three of her servants, penitents like herself, and her mother were burned alive for giving Christian burial to the relics of the saint.

Before her martyrdom, St. Afra gave all her wealth as alms, and with such humility that she scarcely dared to offer help to poor Christians. "I begged and entreated them," she said, "to please so far as to accept an alms at my hands and to pray to God for my sins." Nor did she ever stop crying over her offences. Yet, after all, this fervent penitent could not bring herself to think that she had satisfied the justice of God till He permitted her, in His mercy to die for Him.

"How do you know," said the judge, "that Christ has received you into His society?"

"In this," she answered, "I know that God has not cast me from His face, because He allows me to make a glorious confession, and so to obtain, as I believe, forgiveness of my sins."

Though he who lives in the state of sin may perform

all kinds of good works, pray, fast and give alms, yet he cannot expect the least reward for it hereafter. What an injury do sinners inflict upon themselves who for a long time, often for years, neglect to confess. Even venial sins are a great evil: and if we view them as an offence against God we must look upon them as the greatest of temporal evils. Venial sins prevent our entrance into heaven, and must be atoned for in purgatory. The greater the number of venial sins, the longer will be the punishment in purgatory. Should we not confess frequently in order to free ourselves more and more from venial sins, that we may not be compelled to suffer long in purgatory? Those who disregard venial sins commit them without fear or scruple. He who does not confess often, often falls into a state of lukewarmness, and runs the risk of finally falling into mortal sin and being damned forever.

A young boy, who had made his first Communion a short time previous, was sent to a trade school as an apprentice by his parents. On the day of his first Communion he made one great resolution, which by all means he was determined to keep. It was this: "If by some misfortune I should happen to fall into mortal sin, I will go to confession before I retire to rest on that very same day."

A misfortune occurred. It was on a Saturday, and the weather was exceedingly stormy; moreover, the priest lived a considerable distance away. The tempter, who had been the occasion of his fall, suggested to him that he delay his visit to the priest for a few days, considering that he lived so far away and the weather was so bad. But suddenly calling to mind his promise, he seemed to hear deep down in his soul a voice—perhaps it was that

of his guardian angel—which urged him to go at once: "Go to confession at once, do as you promised."

For a moment he hesitated. Falling down on his knees, he said a Hail Mary, to obtain the grace of knowing the will of God, and of following it. He rose from his knees and set out for the church. On his return he met his godmother, who inquired of him where he had been. He told her all, with joy in his countenance: "I could not go to sleep," he said, "until I had been reconciled to God."

His mother had been accustomed to allow her children to sleep longer on Sunday morning than on other days. She knocked on the door of the little room in which her son slept, to awaken him. A quarter of an hour afterwards she went again to see if he had gotten out of bed, but received no answer. She then opened the door to find him still in bed, asleep, as she thought. "Rise quickly, you lazy boy," she said, as she approached the bed; "it is half past seven. Are you not ashamed to"—but seeing that he heeded her not, she took his hands within her own; they were cold. With terror she looked more closely at him. This look told her everything. She screamed and fell on the floor in a faint.

The child was dead and his body already cold. How fortunate for him that he had not delayed going to confession. Children, learn from this example never to delay making your peace with God to regain the state of sanctifying grace, if you are in mortal sin. Whenever you are so unfortunate as to be in the state of mortal sin, make an act of perfect contrition and go to confession as soon as possible.

Children, God generally visits those who confess and show particular contrition with great consolation, imparts to them heavenly peace, and so fills them with His love

that they joyfully do penance and are a good example to others by the fervor of their virtue. Therefore, the oftener we confess, the more God assists us with His grace, and the more secure we are of not falling back into the same sins again.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Service of God

My dear children, there are two masters who are trying to rule us. One is God, who is always urging us by His grace to give ourselves to His service; and the other is the world, which urges us to give ourselves up to the gratification of our passions and forget God. We cannot serve both at the same time; God requires us to love Him with all our heart, and all our mind and all our strength. He is our Creator, from whom we derive our life; He is our preserver, who keeps us every day and every hour; and He is our last end, because He has made us to share His eternal glory. He is the supreme ruler of the universe. We see, then, that He has a right to our entire service. As God wishes us to be happy we should be very foolish not to serve Him with all our heart and mind. He says we cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. By Mammon is meant money and what money will obtain for us—houses, lands, fine clothes and many luxuries. All this is opposed to the love of God.

A dark veil hangs over the future of each one. We know not what is going to happen to us. God alone knows that. He appointed both the time of coming into the world and the time of leaving it. What we have to suffer in body or in mind, we know not. All we know is what our Christian faith teaches us: that we are in the hands of a good and loving Father, who, if we trust Him, will make everything turn for our good.

Children, the service of God alone brings true peace. All pious and God-fearing persons convince us of this. Look at St. Lawrence. He was placed on a red-hot gridiron and roasted alive. Who can imagine the pain that he suffered? He rejoiced in the midst of this inhuman torture, and jestingly said to his torturer, "You may turn me over now, I am roasted enough on one side." After a while he said: "I am now sufficiently roasted, you may take me up and eat me."

It is illustrated by St. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of India and Japan. When many hundred miles distant from his own country, he travelled through unknown lands, suffering from want of food and water; yet, with death looking him in the face on all sides he exclaimed: "Enough! O Lord, enough! give me heaven only when I have finished my earthly wanderings." Thus God rewards His servants even in this world; He sweetens all their sufferings with heavenly consolations.

St. Isidore was born of poor parents, at Madrid, in the twelfth century, and gained his livelihood as a ploughman. He never learned to read or write, but sanctified himself by his daily work. He faithfully fulfilled the command of God: "Earn thy bread in the sweat of thy brow." Most of his nights were spent in prayer, and his first act in the morning was to attend Mass. His fellow servants accused him of neglecting his work for this purpose. When his master went to the field to learn the truth, he found two angels working by the side of Isidore, to make up for the time he had given to God. He had no fear of anything but sin, and committed all his cares to God with the greatest simplicity.

Hearing in church that his donkey was in danger from a wolf, he answered: "God's will be done," and with perfect composure continued his prayers to the end.

When he returned, his donkey was grazing in safety, and the wolf lay dead by its side.

He constantly divided his food with the poor. Once, when he had given it all away, a poor man appeared. Isidore begged his wife, for God's sake, to find him some soup; and on looking into the vessel he found it miraculously refilled. St. Isidore became a saint because he preferred prayer to God to conversation with men, and because he trusted rather the divine power and goodness than any human aid.

The service of God is easy, because of the great reward which follows hereafter. The thought of everlasting happiness in heaven renders easy all the difficulties met in serving God.

Our journey through life we start gaily. "Whither?" I hear you say. Why, to heaven, of course; for our journey begins as soon as we are born. Some of the way we have to walk with painful steps and frequent halts, some of the way the Lord carries us in His arms when we are sick; but still we journey on even then. Nothing stops this journey, on and on we go every day, a day nearer to God. The Lord gives us help, such as kind friends, good parents, good health and happiness; and the journey goes on so smoothly that we hardly know we are moving. Then suddenly we come to a steep hill: "Why," you say, "this is a steep hill to climb"; but some one wiser than you remarks, "It looks so, but once you get started it is nothing." You make a step forward, then another and, indeed, once started the hill is easily climbed. Before you started it seemed so steep, but before you could realize it you were on the summit, enjoying a beautiful vision of nature.

So it is with you, children, during that period of your life's journey which you spend in school. My, but that

arithmetic looms up as a steep hill. How are you to reach the top? Never, to be sure, if you stand in the valley below and look at it, but make a start and, dear children, I promise you, the steepness of that mountain will disappear. Naturally the climb requires effort, but it is not as impossible as it seemed.

"The Little Flower," or little Teresa, said that the journey of life at one time seemed very difficult to her; all work seemed to be uphill. So it seems to us at times. But when she began to do her duties just for *love* of our Lord, who alone saw and praised her sacrifices, her little duties well done, everything became easy and she said the Lord had provided her with a "lift," and the "lift" was *love*. She was right. Love makes our journey easy. "Love maketh light all that is burdensome; for it carries a burden without being burdened and makes all that is bitter sweet and savory."

The fairy tales which are so interesting to most children tell of the fairy godmother who brings wonderful gifts to the newborn godchild. More wonderful than anything we can imagine and fancy, are the three gifts our Father in heaven gives us in Baptism, when, as newborn babes, we are about to start on our journey through life. These gifts to help us on the way of life are faith, hope and charity; faith, to believe in the beautiful things we cannot see; hope, which leads us to climb and reach that which we do not see, and love, which makes the climb easy. Climb we must, as we journey on, since we cannot fly.

Children, may these three gifts be realized in you—faith, to believe that your present duty, given to you by our Father in heaven, is to study and apply yourself, that your study will lead to success, and love, that will make each duty done for love of God a welcome and blessed effort.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Our Common Debt

The incident told in to-day's Gospel, children, is one that has been repeated every day since our first parents were driven out of paradise. Where is there a city, a village, or even a house, out of which no dead are carried? Death comes to everyone; our turn will come sooner or later. Like the young man of Naim, we too shall be carried to the cemetery, and there our body will find its last resting-place until the day of judgment. Nothing is more certain than death; and yet nothing is more uncertain than the hour of death.

St. Cyril suffered during the persecutions in the third century while he was still a boy, in Caesarea. He used to repeat the name of Christ at all times, and confessed that the mere utterance of this name moved him strangely. He was beaten and reviled by his heathen father; but he bore this abuse with joy, increasing in the strength of Christ who dwelt within him, drawing many of his own age to imitate his saintly life. When his father, in a fury, turned him out of doors, he said he had lost little, but would receive a great recompense, nevertheless.

Soon after he was brought before the magistrate on account of his faith. No threats could make him show a sign of fear. The judge, perhaps pitying his tender years, offered him his freedom, assured him of his father's forgiveness, and besought him to return to his

home and inheritance. But the blessed youth replied, "I left my home gladly, for I have a greater and a better which is waiting for me." He was filled with the same heavenly desires to the end. He was taken to the fire as if for execution, and was then brought back and reëxamined; but he only protested against the cruel delay. Led out to die, he hurried the executioners on, gazed unmoved at the flames which were kindled for him, and expired, hastening, as he said, to his home.

Souls which are on fire with the desire of heaven, long for death; they cannot understand the sorrow of those who would detain them from this sovereign good. Cyril rebuked the Christians who stood weeping around him. "You ought to laugh and rejoice," he said, "and escort me with delight, now that I am about to suffer. Surely you do not know the city in which I am going to dwell." Their grief, however, was but for a moment; and in a letter in which they relate his passion, speak only of their heavenly joy in the glory of the youthful martyr.

Children, ask our Lord to make all earthly joy tasteless, and to fill you with a constant desire for heaven. This desire will make labor easy and suffering light. It will make you fervent and detached, and bring you a foretaste on earth of that eternal joy and peace to which you are wandering.

The history of all times tells us that we do not know when death will come. The first family consisted of four persons: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. Who would have believed that Abel, the youngest member of the family, would die first? The people in Noah's time were eating and drinking when the flood came and took them all away. The daily papers report sudden deaths. We read that some were killed by burglars and robbers,

that one fell from a scaffold and broke his neck, that many persons were drowned, that others lost their lives by accidents on railroads or by explosions. Are not persons most dear to us snatched away from our side by sickness or by accidents?

What lesson should we draw from this? If you are in the state of grace, you must employ all means to preserve that state unto the end. If you depart from the path of virtue and enter upon the road of sin, death may come suddenly upon you in the midst of your sins.

A certain holy priest, named Father Arnold, saw that his end was near, and received the sacraments, with edifying piety. He asked all those who surrounded his bed to pray that he might have a happy death. He had scarcely made this request, when a sudden fear came over him and cold sweat covered his face. "O my brethren," he cried out, "do you not see the evil spirits around me, waiting to carry me to hell? Oh, ask Mary, my heavenly Mother, to help me." His friends at once recited the litany of the Blessed Virgin. When they came to the words, "Holy Mary, pray for him," he cried out, "Brethren, say those words again; I am standing at God's judgment-seat." It seemed as if he saw the wicked spirits standing there to accuse him; he seemed to hear their accusation, for he said: "Yes, but I did penance for that."

He constantly pressed the crucifix to his lips, and continued to whisper the holy name of Mary. Of a sudden he exclaimed: "I come, my Lady, I come," and while saying these words he tried to raise himself in his bed, but in doing so, expired.

The infinite goodness of God, which sanctifies us on our entrance into the world by Baptism, strengthens and enlightens us in Confirmation, nourishes us with the

Holy Eucharist, and heals our spiritual infirmities by Penance, has provided us also with a special sacrament to assist us in our passage out of this life, and prepare us for a happy eternity. This sacrament is called Extreme Unction, or the last anointing, because in it we are for the last time anointed with holy oil.

The virtuous son of King Louis XII one day learned that an old servant of his house was in danger of death, and that he would not listen to his friends, who advised him to regulate the affairs of his conscience. The prince went to the servant's house. "Well, my friend," said he, "I am coming to see you, to tell you how sorry I am on your account. I have not forgotten that you always served me with affection; think on your side, that you would cause me, for the first time in your life, one of the greatest sorrows, if you did not employ the little while you have yet to live in preparing for death." The poor man, softened even to tears by the favor of his good master, awakened from his fatal indifference and prepared himself for the sacraments, which he received with great piety and devotion.

Children, no matter how young you are, be always prepared for death. Keep your conscience free from mortal sin; and if you should have the misfortune to fall into sin, make a sincere confession at once, in order to regain the state of grace. Pray every day to God for the blessing of a happy death.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Our Powerful Advocate

The feast of the name of Mary, my dear children, is celebrated every year on the Sunday within the octave of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin. The name of Mary is venerable because it is the name of her who is the Mother of God. She is the purest, the most glorious and perfect of all the daughters of Eve; she is the queen of heaven and earth.

The Church has held this name in the greatest veneration from the beginning, and, therefore, she directs her priests to bow their heads when they pronounce it, even at Mass, as well as at all other functions. All good and fervent Christians have at all times shown the greatest reverence for the name of Mary. St. Stephen, King of Hungary, renowned for his Christian piety and his virtues as a king, had so great a reverence for the name of Mary that he dared not pronounce it. He used to call her "the Great Lady." All his subjects, following his example, gave her the same title, and if it happened that in their presence the name of Mary was mentioned they at once fell on their knees and prostrated themselves to the ground, to manifest their veneration for so sublime a name.

Blessed Herman Joseph from his earliest years was a devoted child of the Mother of God. As a little child he used to spend all his play-time in the church at Cologne before an image of Mary, where he received many favors.

Once Our Lady stretched out her hand, and took an apple which the boy offered her in pledge of his love. Another time he saw her high up in a niche, with the Holy Child and St. John; he longed to join them, but saw no way of doing so. Suddenly he found himself placed by their side, and holding sweet conversation with the infant Jesus. At the age of twelve he entered a monastery, and there led an angelic life of purity and prayer. His fellow novices, seeing what graces he received from Mary, called him Joseph; and when he shrank from so great an honor, Our Lady, in a vision, took him as her spouse, and bade him bear the name. The Mother of God called his attention to some very small faults, and once appeared to him as an old woman, to upbraid him for some slight want of devotion. As her dowry she conferred on him the most cruel sufferings of mind and body, which were especially severe on the great feasts of the Church. With the cross, however, Mary brought him the grace to bear it bravely.

One bitter winter day, as little Herman was coming barefooted into church, his heavenly Mother, appearing to him, asked him lovingly, why his feet were bare in such cold weather. "Alas, dear Lady," he said, "it is because my parents are so poor." She pointed to a stone, telling him to look beneath it; there he found four silver pieces wherewith to buy shoes. He did not forget to return and thank her. She told him to go to the same spot in all his wants, and disappeared. Never did the supply fail him; but his comrades, moved by a different spirit, could find nothing.

Children, do you ever hear the Angelus ringing from the church tower? What a wonderful message it brings on the breeze; a message straight from heaven repeated to each one of us three times a day; a message of

joy and gladness which lightens all the sorrows of the earth.

Over two thousand years ago an angel first brought to the Virgin Mary this message which the Angelus bell repeats to-day, taking up the glad refrain: "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." Listen, children, to the echo of the Angelus' voice rung out by the bell. "The Lord is with thee, with thee"; with each one of us from that day to this day. For on that day "the Word was made flesh" and Jesus dwelt on earth for very love of man. Remember, too, that it was Mary's answer to the message that brought Jesus to earth. The angel gave his message and waited. He told Mary that the Son of God would come on earth, and only waited her consent to be His mother. Mary's answer, so simple and so great, is rung out to our listening ears: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord"; the servant of the Lord is here. Quickly Mary's will rose up to meet the will of the most high God. He willed to come on earth for love of us; she willed to be His Mother; and at the Word of the most high God who had made the earth and sea and sky, Jesus became man.

Apart from the joy of the message of the coming of Jesus, are not our hearts stirred within us at the beautiful reply of our Mother Mary? Particularly so because we too can share in her reply, accepting all God's messages even as she did the one that meant so much for us all; for we may say with Mary: "Behold, Lord, here are Thy servants, ready and eager to do Thy will."

No angel need tell us His will, we all know it well; each daily task, each homely toil, each daily duty to be done, these are God's will for us and to each we should hasten with eager steps: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," ready to serve. Alas, many young boys and girls

want to be served. Yet Jesus came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

There was a young woman who was very cheerful. She said the motto of her life had been: "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister." She was always rendering some service to others, and seemed to find her joy in doing so. Let us remember in all our doings the spirit of Mary, the servant of God; and for her sake we shall grow to love these lowly home duties and ennoble them by willing and joyful service.

Another young woman once had to leave a comfortable home and go to live at a country place, where all the water had to be brought from a well some distance from the house. The first evening she sat down in despair, for she had a large family of little children to cook for, and they were all too young to help her. Their father, working in the fields, had little time to bring water when it was needed. She was very far from being strong, for all her brave heart. On being asked how she managed to be so contented amid so many difficulties, she replied: "I remembered that Mary, the Mother of God, had to draw water from the well, and every time I went back and forth, I thought of her going about her duties so willingly, regarding no service too small for her to do with all her strength.

Children, do not approach our Blessed Mother with set prayers only. Be intimate with her; confide in her; tell her all your wants and all your plans, small as well as great. It is a childlike trust and an earnest appeal which she delights to reward.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

God's Interests and Our Interests

My dear children, do you know that Jesus tells us to-day what he told the Jewish lawyer a long time ago? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." God deserves to be loved for His own sake, because He is infinitely lovable Himself and very good to us. We must also love Him for our own sake; for without love of God it is impossible to do anything to gain heaven. Make up your mind right now to love God above all things and to show your love by doing His holy will in all things and by guarding against every fault.

Who are those who love God with their lips only? Those boys and girls who pray without thinking; their minds are with their playmates, or their toys. Such children offer an insult to God, and consequently cannot expect any result from their prayers. Those who do not give their hearts to God, do not love Him. All those who are in mortal sin do not love God; they love their evil passions; they tell a direct lie to God as often as they say: "My God, I love Thee." God is not satisfied with a divided heart. To love God with our whole heart means to love God alone, and everything besides God, for God's sake, and as He wills. Children, if you have an inordinate love for any person or thing, expel it from your heart, for your heart is a tabernacle in which God alone should dwell.

St. Francis of Paula had such great love of God in his heart that at the age of fifteen he left his poor home at Paula in Calabria to live as a hermit in a cave by the seacoast. After a while some companions gathered around him, and with them, in 1436, he founded the "Minims," to show that they were the least of the monastic Orders. They observed a perpetual Lent, and never touched meat, fish, eggs or milk. Francis mortified himself continually. As his body withered, his faith and his love for God grew more powerful, and he "did all things in Him who strengthened him." He cured the sick, raised the dead, warded off plagues, expelled evil spirits, and brought sinners to penance. When the avaricious king, Ferdinand of Naples, offered him money for his monastery, Francis told him to give it back to his oppressed subjects, and softened his heart by causing blood to flow from the ill-gotten coin.

There was one person who had calumniated the saint most shamefully. This person paid a visit to the saint, who received him very kindly. Giving him a seat by the fire, St. Francis listened to a long story of his own faults. Then he took some glowing coals from the fire, and closing his hands upon them, unburned, said, "Come, Antony, warm yourself; you are shivering for want of a little charity." Antony, falling at the saint's feet, asked his pardon, and then, having received his embrace, quitted him, to sound the praises of the saint for the rest of his life.

St. Francis often said that all creatures obey those who serve God with a perfect heart.

When we love some one sincerely we often think of him. If, therefore, we truly love God, we frequently think of Him and raise our hearts to Him. It is not good for many of us to have our thoughts everywhere

except with God; that we rise in the morning and lie down in the evening without thinking of God. You children occupy yourselves all day long with your companions, your toys and your meals. Some of you do not give God a thought. Even on Sundays and holydays you give way to distractions in church and during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Many of us treat God as a stranger. Our love of God is just like a tiny spark which is liable to be extinguished any moment.

A father and mother were living with their two children on a desert island in the midst of the wide ocean, on which they had been shipwrecked. Roots and vegetables were their food; spring water was their drink, and a cavern in a rock their dwelling. Storms and tempests often raged fearfully on the island.

One day four Moors landed on the island in a small boat. The parents were greatly delighted, and hoped now to be rescued from their sufferings. The boat was too small to take them all over together to the adjoining land, so the father determined to risk the passage first. The mother and children wept, when he embarked in the frail wooden boat, and the four black men were to take him away. He said: "Weep not; it is a better land, and you will all follow soon." When the little boat returned, and took away the mother, the children wept still more. She also said: "Weep not, in the better land we shall all meet again." At last came the boat to take away the children. They drew near the land with fear and trembling. How delighted were they when their parents appeared on the shore, then led them into the shade of lofty palm trees, and refreshed them with milk and honey.

"My dear children," said the father, "our voyage from the desert island to this beautiful country has a higher

meaning. We are all destined to make a much longer journey to a much more beautiful country. The whole earth upon which we live resembles an island; this glorious land is an image for us, although only a faint one, of heaven. The voyage hither over a stormy sea is death; that little boat resembles the bier, upon which men in black garments shall sooner or later carry us. When the hour strikes for us, for myself, your mother or you to leave this world, be not afraid; for death is to pious men, who have loved God, and have done His will, nothing but a voyage to the better land."

Children, as your soul will never die, so let your love never die; therefore shun every mortal sin, which is the death of love. Do all for the love of God, that you may become richer and richer in merits in this world, and hereafter receive in heaven the reward of all that love God.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

God Ready to Forgive

The man sick of the palsy, my dear children, had reason to be of good heart when our Lord forgave him his sins. Palsy is indeed a great affliction; but the sins which had been on his conscience were a still greater evil. His sickness made his earthly life miserable; but his sins, if he had died in them, would have brought eternal damnation upon him. What a great grace to receive forgiveness of his sins! The very moment Christ said to him: "Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee," he was no longer a slave of Satan, but a child of God.

As long as we are in full health and strength we are apt to forget God, and live for our passions; but when God lays His hands on us, we open our eyes and see things in their true light. Our sins come before us. They show themselves in all their meanness and ugliness. So this poor man was oppressed by the weight of sin. It was a great blessing from a merciful God to become contrite.

St. Clare was the daughter of wealthy and noble parents; she was twice married, and her life, up to her conversion, was spent in the enjoyment of the riches and pleasures of the world. As she prayed in the Franciscan church at Rimini Our Lady appeared, surrounded by angels and saints. "What good are all the honors, all the fortune and the youth you enjoyed, since death has taken your husband from you?" In a moment Clare

saw the folly of her life, and her resolve was taken. A hair-shirt, sharp discipline—these were to be hers in the future. A small cell, a board to sleep on, bread and herbs to eat—for these she was to exchange the comforts and refinements of the world. To these penances she added an active zeal for good works. She served a community of Poor Clares as a lay sister. She would run messages for the poorest. She offered herself as a slave to ransom a criminal in the common prison of the town.

Soon after her conversion St. Clare was often tempted to return to the ease of her former life; but she resisted every impulse of this kind by constant ejaculatory prayer and self-imposed penance. One day, having been tempted to some slight act of self-indulgence in eating, she searched with much trouble for a disgusting insect, and having found one, placed it in her mouth, saying, "Eat, glutton; eat, then, this dainty dish." From that hour she never suffered another temptation with regard to food or drink. St. Clare well understood the text of Holy Scripture, "And when thou shalt seek the Lord thy God thou shalt find him; yet so if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all the affliction of thy soul."

Our heavenly Father is most ready to forgive us as soon as we are penitent. No matter how great sinners we may have been He forgets all as soon as we turn towards Him. The only conditions are that we sincerely regret having sinned, and be resolved to sin no more. Then God will meet us more than halfway. He will console us, He will call us by the most endearing names. We shall be His sons, and He will be a good Father to us. He will give us that peace of mind which the world cannot give. He will make our whole life happy. He will give us strength to bear most cheerfully all the ills of life.

Many years ago the town of Nottingham, in England, was visited with a thunderstorm, the effects of which were very disastrous. The lower part of the town was flooded, and the poorer classes, who inhabited cellars, as well as many shopkeepers, suffered severely. Among those who sought shelter from the pitiless storm in Milton's Head Public House was a young man, a lace-maker by trade. For some time he amused himself with ridiculing the fears of the company, but his language, which was most unbecoming, at last became impious and profane. He used the holy name of God in a most blasphemous manner and with bitter oaths, expressed a wish that a thunderbolt might come down and strike the company. Then, raising himself, he looked through the skylight over the room in which they were sitting, and, with profane gestures, defied the lightning. At that moment a vivid flash entered the room, and in an instant he was lying speechless on the floor. He was lifted up by the trembling bystanders, none of whom was injured, and laid down upon a couch. The first words he uttered on recovering his speech were: "God forgive me, a poor sinner." He remained blind, however, and was removed to the hospital. God was ready to forgive even this blasphemer.

Children, let us be animated with great fervor in the service of God. If any of you are in sin, and feel sin to be a burden, a heavy one, turn to God, pray for pardon, conceive a horror for sin, and resolve to lead good lives.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Ambassadors of Christ

The Jews gave no ear to the messengers of God; they even persecuted them and put them to death. What God did for the salvation of the Jews, He also does for us, my dear children. He sends His priests to preach the Gospel to all, believers and unbelievers. As in those days, so now many disregard the good work of the ambassadors of Christ; they give no ear to their admonitions, and they even persecute them and put them to death.

Priests are the ambassadors of God. If we honor representatives of kings and emperors, how much more should we honor those who represent God amongst us. We should honor the representatives of God, because in doing their duty they act, not in their own name, but in the name and person of Christ. When they offer up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, administer the sacraments, preach the Word of God, or bless the people, it is Christ Himself who acts in them.

What man is able to express the power of the priest? Great was the power of Adam, who, as king of the universe commanded all its creatures. Great was the power of Moses, who with one word divided the waters of the sea. Great was the power of Josue, who said to the sun: "Move not," and the sun stood still. Great is the power of kings who with their armies subjugate entire nations. But there are men who are still mightier, who have power not only over the body, but also over

the soul of man, who have power not only over creatures, but even over the Creator Himself; they are the priests.

Catholics at all times have shown great honor to the priests of the Catholic Church. St. Anthony honored priests so much that when he met them he got down on his knees before them, and would not rise until they had given him their blessing. St. Francis of Assisi used to say that if he should meet a priest and an angel together, he would first salute the priest. This has always been the custom of all good Catholics. They honor priests; for they see in them, not frail men, but ambassadors and ministers of God. Thus you also must honor priests and treat them with respect.

St. Martin, the illustrious bishop of Tours, visiting the court of the Emperor Maximus, was invited, with the priest who accompanied him, to sit down to dinner at the emperor's table. During the repast a cup of wine was poured out and presented to Maximus, who, wishing to do honor to the holy bishop, ordered the cup first to be handed to him, expecting that, when the latter had tasted the wine, he would return it. To his surprise, however, and that of the whole court, St. Martin, after he had drunk, passed the cup to his companion, the priest, as being the most exalted person in the assembly. Far from being displeased, Maximus applauded the action of the saint, acknowledging that, in the sight of God, who estimated things at their true value, the imperial is far inferior to the priestly dignity.

Ah, my dear children, with what holy awe and profound reverence should we not regard the office of the priest! What respect, too, should we not show in our conduct towards him. The lips of the priest have the power to call down the Son of God upon the altar, and to open the gates of heaven to the penitent sinner. His

hands are daily sanctified by the touch of the most pure and spotless body of Jesus, which he holds and raises aloft, and carries in Holy Communion to the faithful, a privilege like that of Mary, to whom it was given to nurse and carry the divine Infant in her arms.

A certain traveler happened, at nightfall, to reach the borders of a large forest, through which he was obliged to pass to reach his destination. Here he met a shepherd, who was leading his flocks home to the fold for the night. He inquired of him the way by which he might reach his destination in safety. "The way which leads to the town to which you are going," he answered, "is long and dangerous, and it will be very difficult for me to point it out to you; for the forest is crossed by so many paths that it will be almost impossible for you to find the right one. There is indeed, one road, which is broad and easy to walk on, but instead of bringing you to your destination it will lead you to a terrible abyss into which many careless travelers have fallen and perished." The shepherd added: "It is a steep and seemingly bottomless ravine, situated at the other end of the forest. It contains wild beasts, one especially. We often find remains of unfortunate people whom it has devoured. I have stationed myself here at the entrance of the forest, through charity, to guide any one who may happen to enter it by this side. Follow me, therefore, if you wish to escape death."

Then carrying in one hand a lantern, he took in the other that of his companion, and during the remainder of the night they walked together through the forest. When morning dawned, they found that they had reached the farther end of the wood without accident. It was only then that the traveler came to realize the extent of the favor that his guide had conferred upon him.

Children, the traveler of whom I have spoken is yourself. The large forest is the world in which we live. The wild beasts are the enemies of our soul, and the terrible monster which destroys so many people is Satan himself. The abyss which the stranger escaped is hell, and the paths by which he was led to the end of his journey are those of piety, charity, justice and purity. The charitable guide is not only your guardian angel, but is, in a particular manner, the priest whom God has given you as your visible guide to instruct you in the way you should go, and to direct your feet in the paths of His Commandments, until you reach your home, the kingdom of God. Listen, my dear boys and girls, to the words of the priest, who is the representative of Jesus Christ, to reach safely your happy, eternal home.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Good Example

At the conclusion of to-day's Gospel, my dear children, we read that not only the ruler, but also his whole house, believed in Jesus. If the ruler had not believed in Christ, those of his house would not have believed in the Son of God. The ruler gave a good example to his subjects. Children, if you are blessed with good parents who give you a good example there is no better training to become good Catholic men and women. Good example is the best teacher of good morals.

If you see your parents pray very devoutly, diligently visit the church, and by their daily conduct show that they have the fear of God before their eyes, it will make a good impression upon you. That which is good will take root in the hearts of the young and will become almost a second nature. When you young people grow up, when hard knocks cross your path in the future, you will be so confirmed in virtue, that sin will not overcome you. Even if you should fall, you will soon rise; your conscience will give you no rest, but will urge you to reconcile yourselves with God as soon as possible. The Prophet Ezechias speaks of a wagon drawn by four living beings; as these moved along, the wheels of the wagon turned round and followed. By this wagon we can understand a family; the parties that draw the wagon are the parents, but the wheels are the children. Now just as the wheels turned around and went in the same

direction as the ones that drew the wagon, so children act according to the example of their parents. St. Chrysostom says: "The works of the parents are the books from which children learn, the tongue and the lips of the parents, are as so many books, from which children are taught."

There lived about the middle of the thirteenth century in Brittany, two pious Christians. God blessed their union by giving them a son, whom they called Joseph. They resolved to bring him up in piety and in the knowledge of the law of God. The mother especially watched over him and often said to him: "Joseph, you must be a saint." The child, hearing these words so often, said to his mother, one day: "Mother, what is a saint?" "A saint, my child, is one whom God has made to be forever with Him in heaven. A saint is one who loves God above all things, and His Son, Jesus Christ; one who keeps all the Commandments of God, that he may be with Jesus Christ in heaven." The child used to listen to these lessons of his mother with hands folded, and his eyes fixed on hers, as if drinking in every word she said, and when she had ended, he used to say to her: "Mother, I must be a saint; I will love God with all my heart, and all my lifetime I will try to please Him."

His father's lessons were also full of wisdom, "My child, your mother has taught you how to love God, I will teach you how to love your neighbor for God's sake." He would take his little Joseph on his missions of charity, and show him those outward deeds of virtue that mark the Christian before men, and make him glorify his Father who is in heaven, and thus the holy child grew up a saint.

There was once a pious mother who had a son, whom she taught to love God. From his earliest years he fol-

lowed the holy counsels she gave him, and grew up a model to all the young men around him. He frequently approached the sacraments, and there was every appearance that he would live and die a saint. Things went on in this hopeful way till he had reached his seventeenth year. All at once a change came over him. His piety seemed to melt slowly away, and he no longer went to the sacraments as he used to. This change in his conduct was soon observed by his good mother. For a long time she tried very hard to find out what was the cause of this change. He never went with bad companions, and she never saw him read forbidden books. One day, when she was more sorrowful than ever, she went to see him in his room. "My dear child," she said to him, "you must tell me what is the cause of this great change that I have noticed in you; you are not the same pious boy that you used to be. Tell me all about it."

The son did not speak. He hung his head and his face grew crimson with shame. His mother became more and more alarmed, and pressed him with the most endearing words. "Mother," he began, "since you have asked me in this way, I will not hide anything from you; I will tell you all. I loved my religion dearly and I found my greatest delight in the practice of it. Now I have grown up, and I have begun to reflect. Look at my father; see how the world honors and esteems him. Oh, how much I would like to resemble him! Yet, he does not practice his religion. Surely I cannot do wrong in acting as he does. Now, my dearest mother, I have told you all."

The poor afflicted mother left her son, and flew at once to the room where her husband was. As soon as she entered she fell at his feet, crying out: "Oh, my husband, your son, your son," and she fainted in his arms. Her

husband, terrified at what had happened, used every remedy to restore her to consciousness. When this was accomplished she sat down by his side, and in the midst of tears and sobs, told him all that her son had said to her.

"Come with me," he said. "I have ruined my boy, but I may yet save him." With these words he went down to his son's room. "My child," he said, "it is indeed a hard thing for a father to go down on his knees before his own son, but I will do it. Yes, my child, I am guilty of a great sin, but I have not lost my faith. It is that cursed human respect that kept me from professing my faith openly. Thank God, it is not too late. Forgive me, my dear child, for my bad example. Who is your confessor. He shall also be mine."

Ever afterwards there was fervor in that family.

My dear boys and girls, thank God from the bottom of your hearts if you have good parents. Pray constantly for them, that God may lighten their burdens and give them the strength to carry their crosses.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Honesty Is the Best Policy"

From to-day's Gospel, my dear children, we learn that we must not only pay our debts, but also restore that which belongs to others. This is a sacred duty upon the fulfillment of which depends our eternal salvation. On the last day it will be shown that many souls have been condemned to hell because they did not make necessary restitution. When any one takes anything from us we certainly do not wish him to keep what belongs to us; our desire is that he should restore the stolen property. We are bound to repair any injury we have done our fellow men. He who does not do so, sins against the law of God. Even the pagans considered theft a very mean vice.

The law demands that we give and leave to every one his own. "Owe no man anything," says St. Paul, "but to love one another." This truth is clearly illustrated by an event in the life of St. Medard. A thief stole from the saint an ox that had a bell on its neck. He brought the ox home and put him in the stable; and although he moved not, the bell was continually ringing. When it began to get dark and the thief feared discovery, he filled the bell with hay, but in spite of this precaution it still rang. What was he to do? He tore the bell from the ox, took the hammer out of it, and locked it up in a box; but it ceased not to ring; he buried it in the earth, but it continued to ring. Finally, full of fear, he returned the ox to St. Medard, when the bell ceased ringing. This

ever-ringing bell, children, is justice, which demands restitution till it is satisfied.

A Tartar officer, entering one of the gates of Peking, dropped his purse. A Chinese artisan, who was a good Christian, saw it, and followed the officer into the house he entered.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" said the officer.

"You dropped your purse just now; here it is."

"Why do you bring it here? don't you know that the law allows you to keep things you find?"

"I know that, but I am a Christian, and my religion requires me to restore, if possible, whatever I may find."

The reply aroused the curiosity of the officer; later he went to a Catholic missionary, and in time became a zealous Christian.

Children, if you should ever become a servant in a house or work for any one in an office or a factory you are bound by the trust he puts in you. When certain goods are put in a servant's charge he receives the fullest confidence of his employer. Now the servant, seeing the confidence the master places in him, takes advantage of it to steal money or dispose of the goods for his own profit. A shopkeeper sends around one of his men, whom he considers trustworthy, to collect a bill. The collector, however, is a rogue, who keeps some of the money, or, like the unjust steward in the Gospel, deducts a portion of the bill to obtain a gift. A servant girl is sent by her mistress to purchase some goods. She does not go to the shop where she can make the best bargain, but where she is likely to receive a gift from the dealer in return for her trade, a bribe for which her mistress will have to pay in the increased charge made on the bill, or the inferior quality of the goods bought. Again,

a man-servant is hired to work for a certain length of time or to perform certain duties, for a fixed sum. In place of being diligent he wastes his time and neglects the duties he has promised to perform, or does them in a very lazy manner. All these people act sinfully; for they disobey God's Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." Always be honest, never violate any trust which is placed in you.

During the summer of the year 1856, in one of the most fashionable parts of Paris, in the corner of a large doorway, there sat a poor woman selling flowers. Beside her was a little boy, her only child, aged about five years. She supported herself by selling flowers. A gentleman, attracted by the flowers in the basket, went near, and taking up one or two of the bouquets in his hand, looked at them, but laid them down again, without noticing the wistful look and the two tears that were trickling down the cheeks of the poor woman. His daughter, however, saw them, and understood the state of affairs at a glance. Without pretending to observe the tears in the woman's eyes, she silently let some money fall upon the head of the little boy who sat next to his mother, then hurried away to join her father.

"Mother," said the little boy, showing his mother a five-franc note he had picked up from the ground, "what is this?"

"Where did you find that paper, my child?" asked the mother.

"That girl let it fall as she was going away."

Immediately the poor woman rose up, and, running after the girl who had just left, said to her: "Please, miss, you have lost some money," at the same time tendering her the bill she had in her hand. Pretending not to understand what she meant, the young lady told her

to be on her way; but as she continued to follow them, the gentleman looked around. Seeing the bill the woman held in her hand, and hearing his daughter had dropped it, he took it from her and put it into his purse.

His daughter spoke to him in a low voice for a few moments. What she said to him is not known, but the good man, again opening his purse, took out a one-hundred franc note which he gave to the poor woman, along with the bill she had received from his daughter, saying: "My daughter gave you five francs because you are poor; I now give you twenty times as much because you are honest. May God bless you." Saying these words he went away leaving the poor flower-seller stupefied at the good fortune that had befallen her because of her honesty.

My dear children, without restitution there is no forgiveness. No priest, no bishop, not even the Pope has the power to absolve you from sins against the seventh Commandment, as long as you do not make restitution or repair the damage done, provided that it is possible. The priest can now and then remit what one owes to God, as he is the agent of God in the confessional; for example, he can free the sinner of a vow, but not being the agent of your neighbor he can free no one from the duty of making restitution or repairing damage done.

My dear boys and girls, beware of acquiring the property of others by theft, cheating or in any other unjust way. The property of others must be sacred to you. Do not take a penny that is not lawfully yours. Ill-gotten goods are a curse. No blessing will ever rest upon them, either here or hereafter. Do not forget this. Be honest in your dealings; give and leave to every one his own, that when the end comes you may die peacefully.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Courage, Obedience, Loyalty

We all know how it was that Jesus, the Son of God, sowed the good seed in the field of the world. He came down from heaven and was born in this world, a man like ourselves in all respects, except liability to sin. Children, the good Jesus made known to us our holy religion, which is the good seed that produces the children of the kingdom of heaven. After our Lord's death this good seed was sown in the field of the world by the Apostles and their successors, our Lord being with them and guiding them from all error.

The good grain sowed in our hearts must be cultivated. It is by courage, by obedience to the Commandments of God, and, by loyalty to Holy Church, that the good seed bears fruit.

You have all heard of St. Agnes. She was a Roman maiden of great wealth and beauty. Agnes was denounced to the Roman governor as a Christian. He tried every means to win her over to paganism, but all in vain; for within her slender frame she had a strong soul that longed for martyrdom. To terrify her they made a great fire in her presence and put before her all the instruments of torture. Finally she was condemned to die by the headman's axe. Declaring that she would never abjure the Faith of her Lord, she made the glorious sacrifice for which she longed. Those who

witnessed her death were filled with admiration for a religion whose dearest hopes lie beyond the grave.

During the great World War we read much about the brave soldiers who were ready to lay down their lives for their cause. A soldier's glory, dear children, is obedience and courage in every-day tasks and duties. If he distinguishes himself above his fellows, it is only because exceptional opportunity has been given him to show in greater things what has always been characteristic of him in small things—courage, obedience, loyalty. Unless he had cultivated these virtues in his ordinary work he would never have been able to show them when called to extraordinary tasks.

Common every-day duty is the soil wherein must be planted and nourished every virtue and every heroic deed. We sometimes lead ourselves to believe that great deeds are done on a moment's inspiration. Often in the day we allow opportunities to do great things slip through our hands. We have the glorious opportunity at hand and we are either too small to see it, or not courageous enough to seize it.

For example, we read of a famous runner who has beaten the world's record in the hundred-yard dash. We are thrilled by the account; perhaps, especially if we are boys, we would like to do what he did. How we deceive ourselves, looking for the "great deed" far away, where we can never get near it! But a "great deed" is nearly always close at hand, yea, within our reach.

We give no thought to the fact that the runner had to train strenuously day in and day out; mortify his appetite, discipline himself in many ways, give up all pleasures; in fact, he had to succeed in little things before he could perform the greater one; and it was simply because he did the little ones well that he could

accomplish the greater. In questions of character, morals courage, and the heroism to which our holy Faith calls us, we again make the mistake of thinking that they served God best who did extraordinary things; that the saints became saints because they did the wonderful things which we read in their lives. We cannot make a greater mistake. The saints were saints because they did their common every-day duty well; because they loved their fellow men and embalmed every action with the love of God; they did their best and highest in every duty. They saw God and the means of serving God in the actions and duties of their every-day life. Because they were fruitful in little things God granted them favors and the power of miracles; but the real test of their merit in His sight was that they were faithful in the duties common to us all.

You have, close at hand, the means of serving God in a heroic way. You can be kind and considerate at home, obedient to your parents, loving to your brothers and sisters, just and unselfish with your fellows, faithful in your duties, studies and home tasks, clean and reverent in your language, pure in thought, always respectful to older people, upright in your judgments and your ambitions, faithful in the reception of the sacraments, faithful in your prayers. Give me the boy or girl who is faithful in these commonplace duties, and I see the great hero, the true Christian, who, no matter what his or her walk in life, will be a worthy and honored man or woman and a true child of God.

Be great now; be heroic to-day. Your opportunity is always in the present. Do not look for it in the distance, look here, at your side.

It is said that the waters of the Amazon flow into the ocean with such force that for miles beyond the mouth

the water is fresh. A ship was once disabled at some distance from the mouth of the river, and it signalled to the shore for fresh water. The answer was: "Drop your buckets." The captain considered it a poor time for a joke. He signalled that they should not mock him. Again the answer came: "Drop your buckets"; again the captain pleaded for help. When the same answer was returned, the captain obeyed and dipped the buckets into the sea. The water was found to be fresh.

We often look far off for the opportunity to develop character—to grow "big"; but truly if we would only dip our bucket called Effort, into the flowing waters of every-day life, we should find ample opportunity to grow to be great and good men and women, and loyal lovers of Christ.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

God's Love

Jerusalem was a magnificent city. Situated on five high hills, it could be seen from a considerable distance. It contained the Temple of God, and its domes, covered with gold, brilliantly shone in the sun. Our Lord loved the sacred city; He loved its people, His countrymen. When He beheld it on this occasion He burst into tears. He foresaw its coming destruction; this proud city levelled to the ground, its inhabitants put to death or put in prison; all this because of their sins; for, taken up with their pleasures and their money-getting, they had neglected to please God and to live good lives.

Jerusalem, my dear children, is a figure of the soul of each one of us. It is the most beautiful thing in all creation. It is next to God Himself. The soul contains God Himself. "Ye are the temple of God and God dwelleth in you." As Christ wept over Jerusalem so does Holy Church weep and lament over the souls of her children. They do not know the things which make for their peace in this, their day. What is "this, their day?" It is this mortal life; it is a very short and uncertain life; this life, given to us to prepare ourselves for the immortal life to be shared with an immortal God. We may well call it a day, for it is indeed brief and rapidly waning.

St. Louis Bertrand as a youth was modest, humble and devout. He spent many of his nights in hospitals, ministering to the sick. Through his whole subsequent life in religion he was consumed with an intense dread of losing the grace of God; and, to secure it, he increased by heroic austerities the sufferings of constant ill-health. His fear was increased by visions of his father's pains in purgatory. He was favored with the gift of miracles, and when preaching in his native Spanish, was understood by persons who knew only other languages.

When St. Louis left his convent in Spain for the labors and sufferings of South American missions, his health became very feeble from the severity of his mortifications; yet no amount of penance could pacify his deep fear of the judgments of God, and frequently at night, after a day of hard toil, the thought of the uncertainty of his salvation would cause him to tremble violently. Time wasted, graces squandered, and actual sins long atoned for, rose up to condemn him, and his only consolation was to prostrate himself before the crucifix, to implore the mercy of the eternal Father through the merits and sufferings of His Son.

Children, the saints fasted, toiled, and wept, not only for the love of God, but for fear of damnation. How shall we, with our self-indulgent lives and guilty consciences, face the judgment-seat of God?

We are to love God and to serve God in this world to be happy with Him in the next. That is if we obey Him and do His will, we shall reach our final destiny; but if we are disobedient and live for this world, and despise the God who created us, we shall be forever banished from His presence, cast into eternal hell fire.

St. John Climacus relates the following story: "There lived in the East a young man who had from his youth

given himself up to every kind of sin, and was conspicuous even among the wicked for his evil deeds; but God spoke to the heart of this young man, and inspired him with the resolution to return to his heavenly Father. Going at once to a monastery in Alexandria, he fell down at the feet of the abbot, and besought him to admit him to the number of his religious.

The holy man, who had heard much of the bad life of this man, was indeed glad to see him kneeling so humbly at his feet, but fearing that his present emotions would soon pass away, said to him: "My son, you will never be able to practice the austerities which our monks practice; nor would you ever be able to confess your sins publicly in the church, as is the custom amongst us."

"Yes, my Father," he answered, "not only would I confess all my sins before the monks of your house, but I am willing to confess them in public before all the world, if necessary."

The abbot then admitted him.

On the following Sunday, when all the monks were assembled in the church, the abbot ordered the young man to be brought in. He entered, arrayed in sackcloth and covered with ashes. The abbot then made him face the monks and bade him to begin his confession. He at once obeyed and recited his sins amid sobs and tears. As he was thus accusing himself the monks saw standing at his side a beautiful angel, who held a large open book and with a pen effaced every sin that was confessed. God was pleased to make known in this way that He forgave that great sinner all the wrong he had done, because he was sorry for his sins, and had confessed them.

Our Lord wept over Jerusalem because He foresaw the destruction so shortly to befall it. So will the soul

face destruction at the hour of death. Its enemies shall surround it on every side. If the dying man has his senses, he will see with a horrible dread death approaching him. He must separate himself from everything to which he has been attached. He sees that he is entirely unprepared for eternity, and is afraid to meet God. All the sins of his past life come up before him. He has not loved God. He is beaten flat to the ground. He cannot collect his thoughts. In this condition he passes away to meet his God.

Children, we should thank God that our time of grace is not over. When God visits our souls we can still hear Him and obey His voice. He has visited us often. He visits us often when we are in church and listen to the Gospel, as we have to-day when He told us of the last judgment. He visits us when we are sick, or when there is a death in the family; and He often visits us in the very bottom of our hearts. As soon as we shut out all bad thoughts and all worldly thoughts, God begins to speak to us, to warn us, and threaten us if we are in sin, to urge us to go to confession, and, if we are in the state of grace, He encourages us to persevere.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Remember Thy Last End

A day and an hour will come, my dear children, when we shall cease to breathe, our eyes will close, our ears will no longer hear the voices of our friends; our hands and feet will grow cold, our heart will cease to beat, and our body will become motionless. Death is certain to come to all. Although you are young, death will snatch you away just as quickly as it will the old man who is standing on the brink of the grave. With the first breath you drew you started your march to death. As death is certain, it is a good thing for the young, as well as the old, to think frequently of it, so that all may prepare themselves well for the greatest event of their lives.

A nobleman of England had, at the time jesters, or professional fun-makers, began to go out of fashion, a bright fellow attached to his household to entertain his guests. His master gave him a staff, or wand of office. "Keep it," he told him, "until you shall find a greater fool than yourself."

The jester accepted the gift in the spirit in which it was given and used to flourish the wand on festive occasions of state.

Even the laughter and jollity with which the nobleman surrounded himself could not prevent a visit from the master, death, to whom we must all sooner or later submit. He lay ill on his couch, from which he was soon to be carried to the tomb of his fathers. All the

well-meant consolations of his servants and friends were of no avail; he wished only to see the poor fool who had done his best to make a troubled life happier. The jester was summoned.

"I have sent for you," said the nobleman in a weak voice, "to tell you that I am going on a long journey."

"Whither?" asked the jester.

"To a far country—in truth, to another world," answered the dying man.

"How long will you be gone? A month perhaps?"

"Longer than that."

"A year—you will not be gone a whole year!"

"I shall be gone forever."

"O my dear Lord!" said the poor fellow, "have you made provisions for the journey, and have you arranged for your entertainment in that other world where you are to stay so long?"

The nobleman shook his head.

"But you have made arrangements for your reception? They know you are coming and will be glad?"

"They, whoever they may be, have no announcement of my coming. Neither for my journey to, nor my sojourn in that country have I made preparation."

For the last time the jester availed himself of a jester's privilege of speech. Putting the wand of his office into the hand of his master, he said solemnly: "Here, take this. You bade me give it to one who was a greater fool than I. You are going to another world, to be gone forever, and you start without provision for the journey, nor certainty of finding friends there; surely the wand belongs to you."

When you rise in the morning, you do not know whether you will be living in the evening. Thousands leave their bed in the morning, in the best of health, and

before sunset they are lifeless beings. Heli, the high-priest, and his two sons died suddenly on the same day. On August 15, 1842, Father Papillon was preaching a sermon in the presence of Prince Polignac and a vast audience in the chapel of the French embassy in London. He was in the midst of his sermon, and said: "How precious is time, for we never know at what moment the Almighty will call us before His tribunal, there to give an account of all our actions." These were the last words he ever spoke. No sooner had he finished this sentence than those who were present noticed his color change; they ran up to the pulpit to help him, but it was too late; the venerable priest was dead. Is it not possible that you may rise one morning, not to lie down in the evening because, during the course of the day, death has overtaken you? Since you are not secure against death for one moment, is it not right that every morning, when you rise, you should think of death?

Saint Gertrude was of a noble Saxon family, and at the age of five she was placed in care of the Benedictines, from whom she received her education. She was perfect in humility and self-mortification, in obedience, and in all monastic observances. Her life was filled with wonders. The gift of miracles set its seal on the graces of this elect soul, and it seemed that Jesus could refuse nothing she requested in prayer. She was gentle to all, most gentle to sinners; filled with devotion to the saints of God, to the souls in purgatory, and above all, to the Passion of our Lord and to His Sacred Heart. Her life was one of great and almost continual suffering.

As she lay on her deathbed, languishing with love rather than disease, Extreme Unction was administered, and Jesus, standing at her side, in dazzling glory, whispered words of great consolation to her: "Now is

come the hour thou hast so longed for, the hour in which I shall present thee to My eternal Father." Then the dying saint saw the Blessed Mother of God surrounded by choirs of angels and saints, among them the Sisters she had trained and guided. They sang: "Come away, for the joys of heaven await thee." And when the last moment arrived, Jesus drew nearer still, opened to her His Sacred Heart, received into it her blessed soul, and bore it as a precious pearl to heaven.

My dear boys and girls, frequent thoughts of death will be the means of preserving a good conscience. A good conscience is like a continual feast. Children, walk in the fear of God, that you may obtain the greatest, most necessary of all graces—the grace of a happy death.

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